

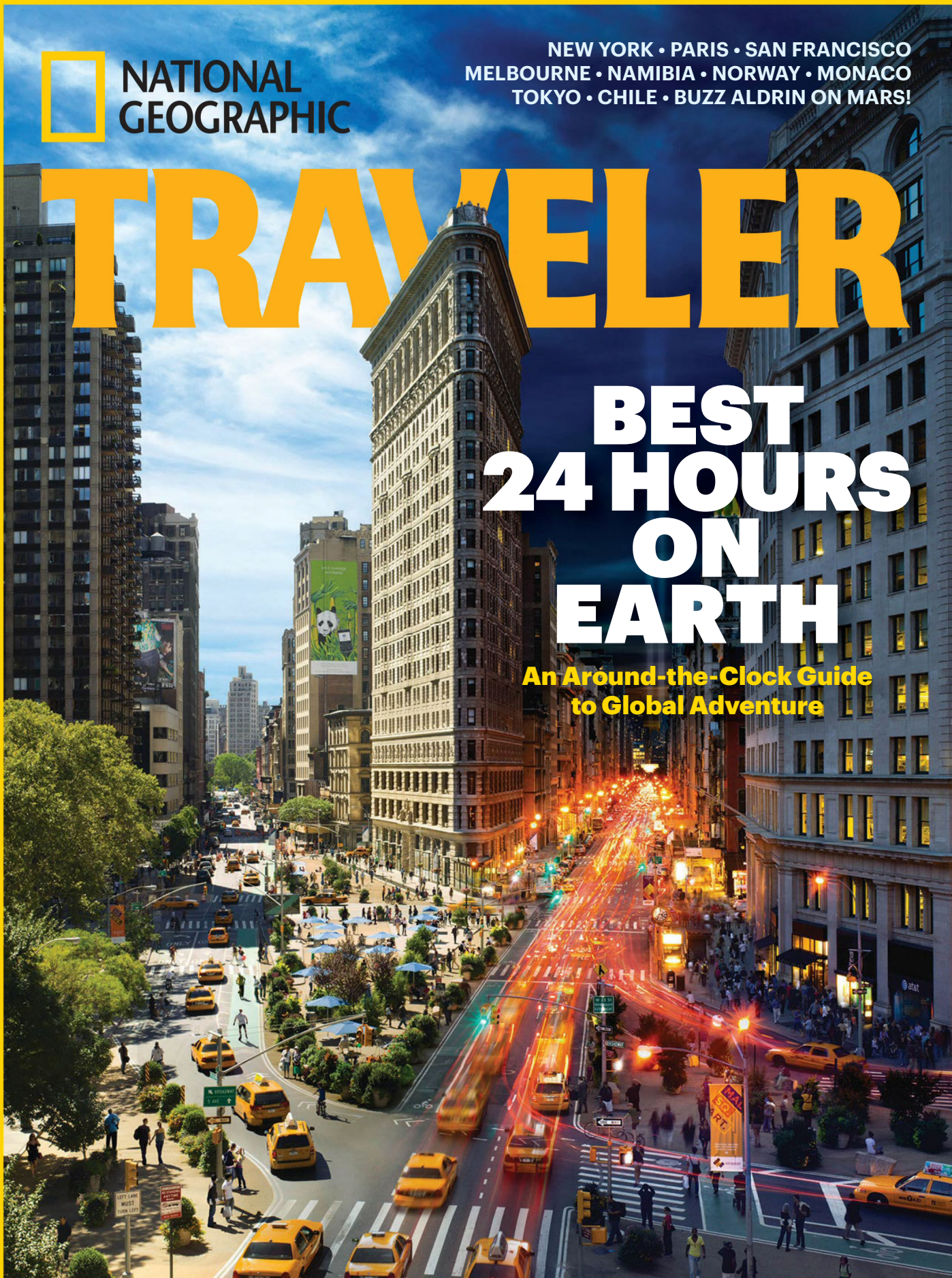


NEW YORK • PARIS • SAN FRANCISCO
MELBOURNE • NAMIBIA • NORWAY • MONACO
TOKYO • CHILE • BUZZ ALDRIN ON MARS!

TRAVELER

BEST 24 HOURS ON EARTH

An Around-the-Clock Guide
to Global Adventure



VISIT...

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CAPTURE DIFFERENT

EDITOR'S NOTE

This #NGTravelHappy entry turns packing for a kitesurfing trip into an adventure all its own.



Every journey is an adventure, a chance to embrace the unexpected, risk old assumptions, and gain new perspectives. This special issue of *Traveler* is dedicated to finding insight through exploration on a dawn-to-dusk-to-dawn, hour-by-hour odyssey that adds up to one ideal day on Earth. We jaunt from the laneways of Melbourne in the morning to the sun-scorched mountains of Namibia at noon to the streets that make New York shine bright at night. Along the way we go pearling in the Persian Gulf, walk the wilds of Tanzania, sip sake in Tokyo, canoe in Kerala, and twirl 'til dawn in Tel Aviv.

One of the promises of travel is that perfect days are possible. Which is not to say that things don't go wobbly on the road. But the adventurous path is one in which every turn leads to an enriching outcome. Our Happiness Issue (Aug./Sept.) led us to two travelers, both from the Czech Republic and now living in Denmark, who shared the image above in our #NGTravelHappy hashtag challenge. Veronika Julinkova and Honza Zak (*left to right*) show us that all the ingredients needed for a fun escape can fit into a photo frame—and a car.

We think that everything needed to plan transformative travel can fit into the imagination, so this issue's global guide is intended to inspire your own. Visit our Best 24 Hours on Earth hub at natgeotravel.com/24hours and dream your own itinerary in which every day of travel is your best day ever.

GEORGE W. STONE
Editor in Chief

Nat Geo Highlights

JOURNEY TO MARS

In November, the National Geographic Channel will transport viewers to the year 2033 on the first human mission to the

Red Planet. Tune in to *Mars* to find out the mission's fate.

NEW BOOK

Explore tribes and traditions around the globe through the pages of National Geographic's *People of the World*. Get a copy at shop.nationalgeographic.com.

GO WITH NAT GEO

This issue features travel experiences from Nat Geo Expeditions and Unique Lodges. Venture with us to Melbourne, Tanzania, Namibia, India, Cuba, Chile, and Alaska.



Note: The cover of our August/September 2016 issue was miscredited. The illustration is by Craig & Karl.



Celebrate the DAY OF THE DEAD in Oaxaca

*An Experience
of a Lifetime*

Itinerary Highlights

Oaxaca offers every traveler an adventure of a lifetime. This eight-day itinerary will make sure you have an authentic travel experience and hit all the right spots.



DAY 1

ARRIVAL AND WALKING TOUR

Transport from Oaxaca International Airport to a luxury hotel in the heart of the city center. Get the lay of the land on an introductory walking tour of the city. Be sure to visit the *Zocalo* (plaza) in the main square, a no-traffic zone shaded by trees and surrounded by arcades. Relax at a café after touring the State Government Palace, Cathedral, and other nearby sights.



DAY 3

TOUR NEARBY VILLAGES

Enjoy excursions to surrounding villages: the archaeological town of Mitla, famous for mezcal; Teotitlan, known for their exquisite weavings; and Santa Maria el Tule, home of the famous grand Tule tree – a massive 2,000-year-old cypress tree, said to be the widest tree in the world.



DAY 2

CULTURAL IMMERSION

Start the day at the Oaxaca Cultural Institute, where you can view exhibits or attend a lecture on Mexican culture or the Day of the Dead. Tour the magnificent Santa Domingo church and the adjoining Museum of Oaxacan Culture.



DAY 4

EXPERIENCE HISTORY

Visit the ruins and museum at the archaeological site of Monte Alban, once considered the capital of the Zapotec people, who lived between 500 B.C. and 800 A.D. Stop in the small town of Arrazola, famous for its fantastical animal wood carvings and local folk art.



There's so much to see and do in and around the city of Oaxaca, and there's no better time to visit than during the fascinating *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) celebrations. This time-honored holiday dates back to the ancient Aztecs and takes place the first two days of November. Festivities begin the week before and include the many ways generations of Mexicans have welcomed the souls of departed loved ones back for a visit.

Families erect colorful commemorative altars adorned with sugar skulls and memorabilia. Offerings of sweet-smelling flowers, especially marigolds, are made, and favorite traditional foods, such as *mole negro*, *pan de muerto*,

and tamales are served. *Comparsas* (parade-like processions) are alive with masks, costumes, music, and mezcal. The path to the cemetery is illuminated with lamps and candles, and it is here that participants seek communion with the dead to offer their solemn prayers...and to celebrate.

Although the holiday is celebrated all over Mexico, Oaxaca has become known for its ornately rich celebrations. Tours include a curated schedule of Day of the Dead events and activities, as well as delicious meals, excursions to surrounding villages, and free time to explore the wonders of Oaxaca on your own.



DAY 5

MARKET AND MASK-MAKING
Go on a guided tour through the Benito Juárez market. Shop for local foods, hand-crafted gifts, and gather objects to make your own altar. Prepare for *comparsas* by attending a mask-making workshop.



DAY 7

COOKING AND COMPARSAS
Discover the secrets of preparing *mole negro* (black mole) in a traditional Oaxacan cooking class. Mole negro is a traditional dish, often offered during Day of the Dead. Watch the lively *comparsas* at the nearby village of Etla.



DAY 6

DAY OF THE DEAD ACTIVITIES
Time to put on your handmade mask and join the parade. Visitors can celebrate *Día de los Muertos* at evening processions and witness vigils in several of the city's cemeteries.



DAY 8

ART AND NATURE APPRECIATION
Take a nature walk to see native plants at the Ethnobotanical Garden. View the works of world-class artisans who are producing beautiful Oaxacan handcrafts at area art galleries. Or head to the spectacular beaches near La Cruzcita for some sun and surf. Enjoy a farewell dinner at Casa Oaxaca, known as the best restaurant in town, before departure on Day 9.



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BEST 24 HOURS ON EARTH

DAY ► NIGHT

AN HOUR-BY-HOUR GUIDE FOR THE TRAVELER WHO NEVER STOPS

Coffee and croissants in Melbourne • Hike a glacier in Argentina • Climb to ancient cave paintings in Namibia • Happy hour in Tokyo • Live music in New York City • Stargaze in the Atacama

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The sundials in this issue point to the time of day (or night) for each hourly adventure!

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5 a.m.
Search out
a solitary
Hawaiian
beach as
dawn breaks.

9 a.m.
Start with a
cup of joe in
coffee-loving
Melbourne.

Noon
Escape the
sun to view
ancient cave
paintings in
Namibia.

6 p.m.
Boat the
backwaters
of Kerala at
dusk.

8 p.m.
Turn the
music up: It's
New York City
at night!



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Steam rises above
molten lava at
Volcanoes National
Park, Hawaii.

Dawn

Whether day breaks gently or in fiery glory,
dawn is a time to look at the world anew





HAWAII

Dive into a new day, from Oahu to Uluru **BY P. F. KLUGE**

If you dream of islands, dream of how they are at dawn, on the border between night and day, sleep and waking. Dream of them when they are cool and hushed, before heat and light chase the dream away. I learned this lesson—you could say it dawned on me—years ago. It's been confirmed many times since, across the Pacific and around the world.

It's still dark in Honolulu as I head on a highway that takes me to the eastern side of Oahu, past black basalt boulders and blowholes, waves geysering into the air. I stop at Sandy Beach, where locals greet the new day, some of them blowing conch shells to welcome morning. I continue to Waimanalo, where I find a beach, shaded by casuarina trees, that goes on for miles. Then I drive uphill on the Pali Highway and turn onto Old Pali Road, which runs through a rain forest, a tunnel with eucalyptus trees meeting overhead, mosses, vines, blossoms. It is cool and green and quiet. A perfect morning in paradise.

"Where America's Day Begins" is a slogan associated with Guam. It also applies to nearby Saipan, eight hours west of Hawaii by plane, across the international date line. Now part of the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Saipan was a World War II battleground, and traces of that war—pillboxes, rusted landing craft—are everywhere. I first went to this island as a Peace Corps volunteer. I had requested Ethiopia or Turkey. I was sent to Saipan. It changed my life. I fell in love with the place. I've returned many times, to see how the lives of people I know are turning out and whether the battered, beautiful island still casts its spell. When I'm back, I'm up at dawn, driving along

a coast lined with red-blossoming flame trees. I turn onto a bumpy road that brings me to Wing Beach just when the rising sun shines on the foaming crests of waves crashing in from the Philippine Sea. It's a new day's baptism.

South of Saipan, in Palau, dawn is indispensable, a time of awakening, with dogs and roosters sounding off, old women heading to taro patches, men tinkering with nets, spears, and outboard motors. It's a birth and blessing that lasts until the heat of morning rolls in as implacably and almost as wetly as the tide. Yet dawn here is not about temperature. It's about the smothering thickness of the air. You might be wearing a T-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops, but you feel like you're swathed in winter clothing. The occasional breezes are Mother Nature's insincere condolences. Warning: If you see people using umbrellas to shield themselves from sunlight, not rain, you're in trouble.

Dawn is when you plan your day, your future; sunset is when you contemplate your past. Too often dawn is missed, even in places where daybreak is the very heart, not just the start, of each day. Fly into the center of Australia, and you find dawn at its most winning. Here, in a vast emptiness, sits Uluru, a big hunk of red sandstone that rises more than a thousand feet and descends as many feet, or more, belowground, in an arid plain. Its size and solitude, and its place in local creation stories, make it sacred to Australia's Aboriginal people and entrancing to me.

In a hotel near Uluru I awaken well before sunrise and am dazzled by a sky that has more stars by far than I've ever seen. Put them in dry, clear air, no trace of pollution or urban glow, and here the stars ambush you. Uluru is out there in the darkness somewhere. I drive toward it, park, and approach the sandstone monolith on foot. Ever so slowly the sky becomes a little less black, then turns gray. The colossus declares itself. It feels like a living thing. It pulses colors: purple, then stark red, then orange, yellow, brown. I move closer to the magic, start running around the rock. Energized, I jog past small caves and sacred springs. I have Uluru to myself.

Then daylight arrives. Cars and vans begin to fill the parking lot. Some carry tourists determined to climb to the top of Uluru, a vulgar, sometimes fatal display of egotism that is officially discouraged but not quite prohibited. With heat come the flies, all around me, slow hungry things, a half dozen exploring the netting that hangs from my cap and shields my face.

Photographers have told me that sunrises and sunsets are interchangeable. Look-alikes. Most people love sunsets. They position themselves on patios and porches, at beaches and taverns, for happy hour, with fireworks across the horizon, captivating until the call for dinner. But to me it's no contest. Dawn is when the world is at its best, a fine and private place. Breakfast, and everything after, can wait.

P. F. KLUGE is writer in residence at Kenyon College and the author of 11 books, including the 2012 novel *The Master Blaster*, which is set on Saipan.

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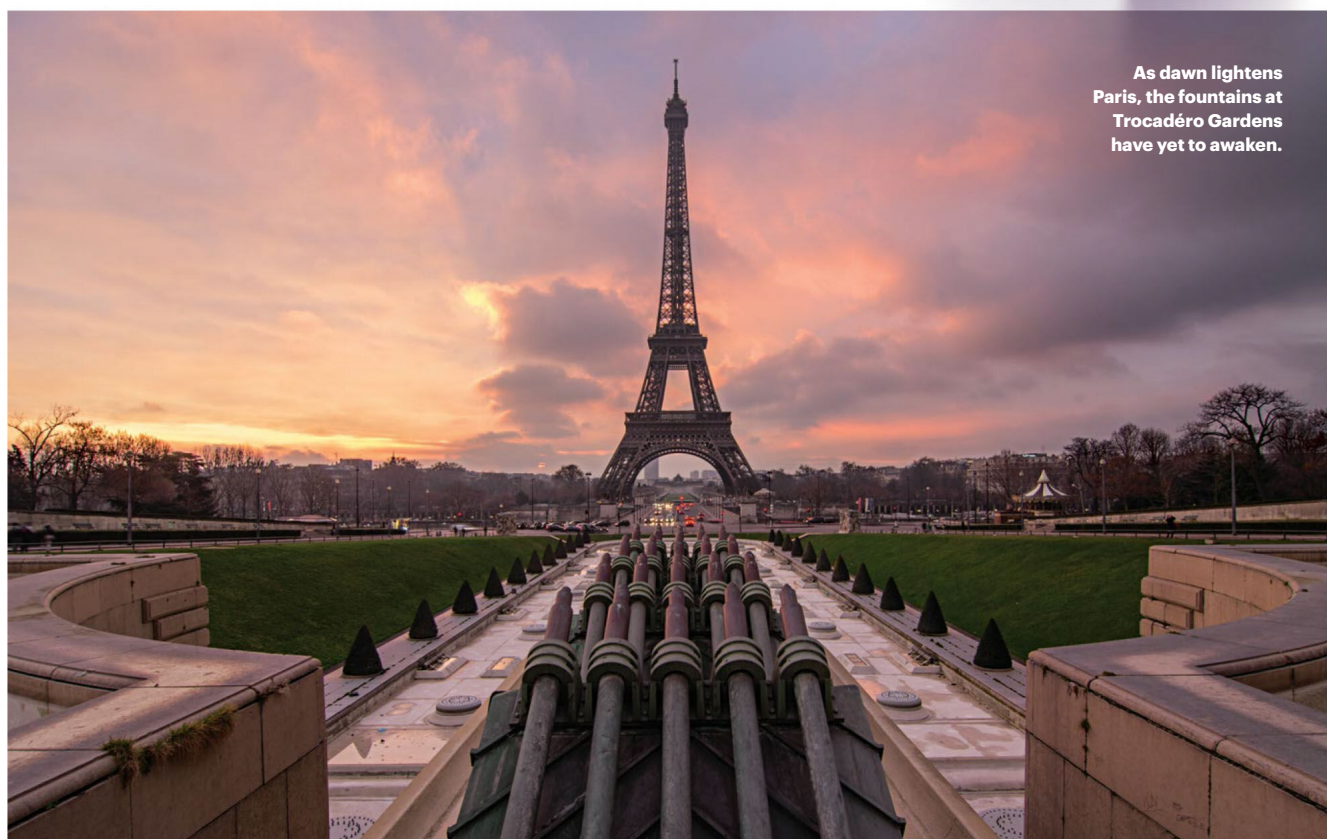
PARIS

Bonjour! Start off with a market visit in one of the world's great gourmet cities

Rise and shine in the French capital as the Marché Bastille fills with vendors stacking their produce before the official market opening at 7 a.m. Twice a week (Thursday and Sunday) food stalls sprawl along Boulevard Richard Lenoir, piled high with crates of seasonal fruits and vegetables, baskets of eggs, stacks of cheese, bowls of olives, jars of fresh yogurt, and armloads of flowers. Appetizing aromas fill the air, from sweet breakfast crepes to pans of paella to Alsatian choucroute garnie, and you find yourself waiting for vendors to stop their preparations and ask what you'd like to sample. *en.parisinfo.com* —JILL K. ROBINSON



6 a.m.



As dawn lightens Paris, the fountains at Trocadéro Gardens have yet to awaken.

SAN FRANCISCO

Power up your morning workouts on the city's signature stairs

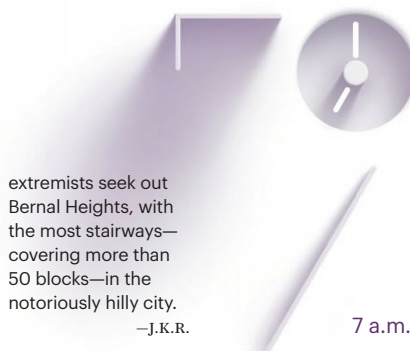
Skip the tiny hotel gym and opt for climbing San Francisco's more than 670 stairways instead. Whether your goals include

a glute-burning workout or merely spectacular views and fresh air, pick up Adah Bakalinsky's *Stairway Walks in San Francisco* to

help plan your uphill course. The wide and well-maintained Lyon Street steps lure fitness fanatics; 16th Avenue's tiled stairs are a work of art; Baker Street claims the longest continuous staircase in the north-side neighborhoods; and

extremists seek out Bernal Heights, with the most stairways—covering more than 50 blocks—in the notoriously hilly city.

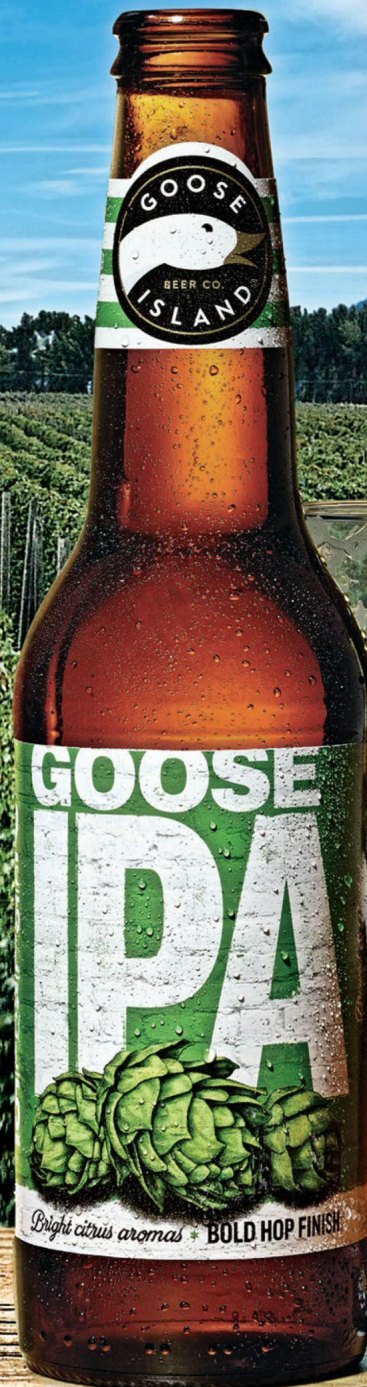
—J.K.R.



7 a.m.

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TO WHAT'S NEXT. GOOSEISLAND.COM

Off the coast of Abu Dhabi, a sailor navigates his wooden boat in waters once prominent in pearling.



ABU DHABI

Early birds get the pearl in the Persian Gulf

Before the glitzy skyscrapers, before the oil boom, Abu Dhabi (and the rest of the United Arab Emirates) was known for natural pearls, a reputation the region hopes to recapture. On the Traditional Pearl Diving Experience with Al Mahara Diving Center, you'll sail to Sir Bani Yas Island on a pearling dhow to learn how to find and identify pearl-filled oysters. Outfitted with snorkeling gear and a traditional basket, you'll use a rope weighted with stones to help you descend. Whether or not you hit upon a *dana* (the most valuable kind), your pearl is a uniquely Emirati keepsake. divemahara.com —J.K.R.



8 a.m.

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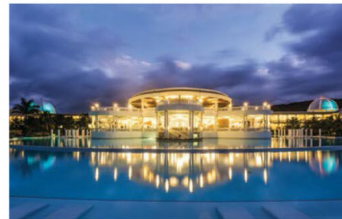
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MELBOURNE



Mornings in Australia's second city begin with croissants and a "long black," followed by fab street art, kayaking, and flying foxes

By Robert Reid

9 a.m.



MELBOURNE

Towering trees in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, 94 acres of green near the city center, upstage the skyline.



Any promising day in Melbourne begins with a cup or two of coffee.

Here, though, you don't order just a "coffee." Australia's second largest city has its own coffee vocabulary. An Americano is called a "long black," a velvety latte is a "flat white."

I'm at Proud Mary, one of Melbourne's buzzier cafés, in the onetime working-class suburb of Collingwood. Along with the nearby Fitzroy neighborhood, Collingwood makes up what you could call Melbourne's Brooklyn. Streets such as Smith, Gertrude, and Brunswick are filled with cafés, along with one-off designer boutiques, art deco bars serving local microbrews, pocket-size sushi joints, and dandy hat shops. It can get a little precious; I heard the word "milieu" three times in one day. I like Collingwood a lot.

Proud Mary, named for the Creedence Clearwater Revival

hit song, offers "cuppings," where visitors crowd the work area to learn how to drink coffee properly. Yes, it can seem like a scene from the hipster-spoof TV show *Portlandia* (enhanced by the stereo playing '80s rap). In fact, Proud Mary is opening a location in the U.S. coffee capital, Portland, Oregon.

"We're not afraid of taking on anyone," proclaims head barista Jak Ryan.

This morning I'm going for a long black. Ryan prepares a "sweet brew" with a new Ecuadorian bean he says he is "just getting to know." Joining locals at a communal table as they down their breakfast, or "brekkie" (the most popular appears to be toast smeared with avocado and topped with a poached egg), I dutifully follow Ryan's coffee advice: Spoon the drink's



frothy top layer toward me three times, sniff deeply, then taste.

For food, I wander backstreets over to Fitzroy, where I come upon a plain brown-brick warehouse that is home to Lune, a bakery that produces what some—including the *New York Times*—say may be the world’s best croissant. Lines often stretch around the corner. I’m lucky; only four people are ahead of me. As I wait to order, my attention beelines to a glass-walled baking station known as “The Cube.” Inside it, Cam Reid, who sports a mustache and man bun and helps run Lune with his sister, a former aerospace engineer, carefully stacks layered dough. When he emerges to take over DJ honors from the barista, also mustached, I ask him about baking.

“Right now, I am working in laminations of dough and butter,” he says. “We have to stretch and fold it for several hours to make the 27 layers.”

The flaky, twice-baked pecan pie croissant may be the tastiest thing I’ve ever eaten.

STREET ARTS If coffee is one way Melbourne likes to tout its superiority over Sydney, art is another. Grand museums and low-key galleries dot the town. The Lyon Housemuseum, in

suburban Kew, for example, occupies part of a private collectors’ home. But it’s the street art of the laneways—the back alleys once so connected with city vice—that makes Melbourne’s art scene most memorable. Shadowy laneways such as Hosier Lane are splattered with color. Spray-can graffiti “tags,” paste-up posters, and towering murals coat any available space on walls, sidewalks, doorways, drainpipes, and trash bins.

For a good introduction, join a walk with Melbourne Street Art Tours. Street artist Chris Hancock, who moved to Melbourne from Perth five years ago, leads my tour wearing a black beanie, black jacket, black jeans, and black high-tops. His energy never wanes on a walk that ends, with beers, at a private studio space he shares with other artists.

On the way Hancock points out a stream of things I would miss otherwise, including art by a who’s who of street artists—stencils by British-born Banksy lurk in one alley corner—and the difference between legal and illegal works.

Our group detours to view Hancock’s latest work, a “loose Purple Rain forest theme” running down the length of ACDC Lane (named for the Aussie hard-rock band). In it I see tributes to the recently deceased Prince and David Bowie.

All playful irreverence, a black-and-white mural announces the Night Cat dance club in Melbourne’s Fitzroy neighborhood—one of many artworks that enliven the city’s streets. Flaky pastries grab center stage at Lune Croissanterie, where embellishments can include peanuts and almonds.





BIKING ALONG THE YARRA RIVER Everyone knows that Sydney has golden sand beaches and fjord-like bays. But Melbourne, the first Australian host of the Olympic Games, in 1956, also is a notable outdoor destination. With less rainfall than Sydney and a generally flat layout, Melbourne is a great place to explore by bicycle.

I'm following a 25-mile trail that takes in meadows, public art, and the Yarra River. Leaving behind the central business district (CBD) skyline, it's just me, a few joggers, and scores of red gums, a type of Australian eucalyptus tree that has grown here for thousands of years.

On my rental bike I follow a path that soon brings me to a scene straight out of the Cotswolds region of England. Sheep graze on emerald green grass before the steeped, 19th-century Abbotsford Convent, a former nunnery that now houses art galleries, "creative" studios, and eateries, and holds a variety of arts events—including workshops—in its Victorian interior.

Today's offering is an "indigenous language workshop," part of the Next Wave Art Festival that includes Abbotsford Convent as a venue. Mandy Nicholson, an artist with Aboriginal Wurundjeri roots, leads an audience through a slide show of Melbourne's Aboriginal history, then holds up a *walert-walert* she made. A traditional cloak fashioned with many possum skins, it's the first one

that has been crafted here in more than a hundred years.

"It's not just a piece of clothing," Nicholson explains, but a "jigsaw puzzle" made of curvy Wurundjeri symbols that make up a "cultural map" of Melbourne. "We're the oldest culture in the world," she says. "And we're still here."

I continue cycling and soon cross the Yarra, where I come upon Yarra Bend Park—and an example of Australia's at times freaky wildlife, flying foxes. Long absent from Melbourne, these winged members of the bat family have returned in the past few decades. Nowadays about 6,000 call the city home, with an additional 30,000 showing up in summer. Hanging from red gums in bunches, they look like orange-brown foxes wrapped in black ponchos. And they screech, even when napping, to the consternation of some locals. "They're quarrelsome, noisy, and smelly," says conservationist Robert Bender. They also are important pollinators and dispersers of seeds, functions integral to a healthy ecosystem. A 1970s native-garden movement led to the planting of indigenous trees, which replenished a food supply that flying foxes favor. Initially they moved into the cherished Royal Botanic Gardens, and many locals called for their extermination. Instead, the city, experimenting with noise machines, drove them to this less obtrusive spot outside the center. Today these intelligent animals, protected by law, are making a comeback.





Narrow, colorful Centre Place draws pedestrians with its small shops, creative cocktail bars, and artful graffiti. Cakes, doughnuts, macarons, and other confections crowd the shelves of Le Bon Cake Shop, a sweet-toothed venue in Melbourne's seaside St. Kilda neighborhood.

WALKING LUNCH IN FOOTSCRAY For my midday meal I'm on a three-stop tour of Footscray, a suburb that has emerged from years as a crime-prone place many avoided. It's said more than 35 languages are spoken here, loosely confirmed as I walk a few blocks from the Footscray Market's fresh produce and packaged noodles—and pass by a Sudanese café, an Ethiopian injera bakery, an Afghan kebab house, Chinese therapy shops, and sidewalk grills cooking Vietnamese *nuong* (pork).

I start my lunch with crumpets and jam at Rudimentary, a year-old café with garden boxes made from reclaimed railroad ties and an eating area carved out of four shipping containers. "It's designed to be portable," says Rudimentary's 28-year-old founder, Desmond Huynh. "My dream is to move this to the mountains and make a climber's pad."

Next I head to nearby Little Saigon Market. Unassuming on the outside, inside it's a whirl of activity, with sellers hawking tropical fruits and freshly carved meats. In one corner I find Co Thu Quan, a five-year-old eatery specializing in Vietnamese street food, including many rare-to-find Hue-style appetizers from central Vietnam. Looking for something small, I settle on *banh trang cuon*, delicious mini rice-paper rolls filled with crunchy beef jerky, fried shallots, sour mango, and dried shrimp.

I finish my lunchtime feasting a couple of blocks away, at Konjo, an Ethiopian restaurant run by Ethiopia-born Abdul Hussen. Hussen made it to Melbourne 13 years ago by way of refugee camps. His small café offers the full traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony, along with flatbread made with *ensete* root flour. I go with (yet more) coffee and a bowl of a flavorful bean stew called *ful*, cooked in tomatoes, onions, and herb-seasoned kibbe butter that Hussen makes himself.

"Everyone mixes here, people accept each other," he tells me, adding that a neighborhood writers' group met at his restaurant the previous day. "I hope it never changes."

FOOTY TIME Everyone in Melbourne—and I mean everyone—"barracks," or roots for, one of Melbourne's many "footy" teams, as Australian football is known. Visit from late March through early October, and you'll spot fans flocking to oval fields in city parks or to the historic Melbourne Cricket Ground, which seats 100,000. Footy is Melbourne's own sport. Played here since 1858, it only spread to the rest of the country, professionally, in 1982.

I'm at the Etihad Stadium in anticipation of watching two local teams play: the undefeated North Melbourne Kangaroos and the St. Kilda Saints. The Saints are something of a doomed

Down Under version of the Chicago Cubs. (They've managed only one championship in their 143 years.) In a stadium room I find the St. Kilda Social Club, fans with gray hair and matching Saints shirts, clutching beers as they convene in a game-day tradition. The biggest Saints fan may be Georgie Day. She jokes that she has missed only two games since 1962, after she moved here from Edinburgh. "I was having my kids those days," she explains, then adds, "This really is a family. After my daughter's

husband died in October, the team brought her food for a week. I love this team." Day has created a Saints museum and even takes memorabilia on the road when the team plays away games.

So, yeah, I'm barracking for the Saints.

I sit in the top deck (seats up here run about \$25). All around me fans wear team scarves and hold Four'N Twentys, steak pies that are to footy what hot dogs are to baseball. A ripple of "oohs" follows a great catch but otherwise everyone sits library quiet; unlike American pro sports, no PA system noise distracts you from the match. And the game is irresistible. It's basically a big wild ramble in which players—wearing tight-fitting shorts, muscle shirts, and no helmets—bounce or punch the ball to teammates. Trainers wearing pink enter the field during play to relay instructions. Scoring is accomplished by punting the ball past skinny posts. If a player misses slightly, it's okay; refs award a point.

After the North Melbourne 'Roos inevitably win—they're playing the Saints, after all—their old-fashioned team song pumps out of the speakers. I follow kids and parents as they flood the field to punt footy balls back and forth, and soon am ducking as balls crash into the grass to my left and right.

SUNSET KAYAK Rising just west of Melbourne's CBD, the Docklands neighborhood is a sea of gleaming glass condos and office towers. I'm viewing it from an unusual vantage point—bobbing in a kayak on the Yarra River in the Victoria Harbour precinct beneath a pinkish purple sunset.

"This is a city of four million, and yet you and I have this waterway to ourselves," says my guide, Kent Cuthbert, who founded Kayak Melbourne.

Part of the reason is the Yarra's recent history as a dirty river, due to industrial run-off. But things may be changing.

"It's now one of the cleanest city rivers I know," Cuthbert says. "Seals have been returning; I saw one under a bridge a while back eating an eel."

We pause for a floating fish-and-chips meal as we watch Melburnians work out in an all-glass fitness center. Resuming our water tour, we glide under low bridges, watch a fire show by a waterside casino, then paddle toward what look like two tall goalposts flanking the Bolte Bridge.

"Yeah, they're ornamental," Cuthbert says. "They're that high to be higher than the Sydney Harbour Bridge."

I love these stories of urban competition, even if they're not true. (Turns out the Bolte towers are just short of surpassing the height of Sydney's hallowed icon.) What is telling is the spirit: Melbourne does whatever it takes to beat Sydney.

As we paddle on, I think, Melbourne needn't worry. It more than holds its own.

National Geographic Traveler *Digital Nomad* **ROBERT REID** ([@reidontravel](#)) now dreams of becoming a trainer wearing pink at a Melbourne footy match.



Melbourne Stays

ART HOMAGE

The Blackman Hotel

One of five Art Series hotels inspired by Australian artists, the boutique 209-suite Blackman, named for and displaying works by painter Charles Blackman, is near the Royal Botanic Gardens. From \$150. artserieshotels.com.au/blackman

APARTMENT LIVING

District South Yarra

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SEA VIEWS

The Prince Hotel

Minutes from the beaches of Port Phillip Bay, this casual design hotel with an award-winning restaurant is in the vibrant southern neighborhood of St. Kilda. From \$115. theprince.com.au

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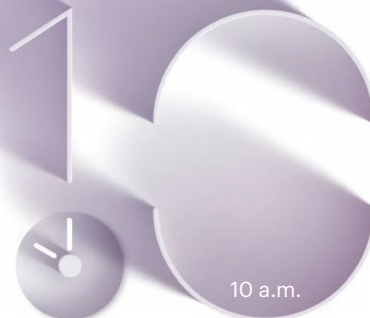


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TANZANIA

GO WITH NAT GEO: Get a ground-level view of animal antics on a walking safari

The wild kingdom feels even wilder when you explore it on foot. On National Geographic Adventures' Tanzania safari, Maasai guides lead two- to eight-mile hikes on the Serengeti Plain and the Ngorongoro highlands, explaining animal habitats and hunting techniques along the way. During visits to Hadza and Maasai villages, kids may rope you into a game of soccer. Don't worry: You do ride 4x4s into the vast Ngorongoro Crater to spot lions, zebras, and elephant calves at play. natgeoexpeditions.com —J.K.R.



A cheetah keeps watch from a termite mound in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park.

ARGENTINA

Hike to lunch atop Patagonia's massive glacier

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With outfitter Hielo & Aventura's daylong Big Ice tour, you'll get a close-up look at the glacier's 200-foot-tall front walls. If you're lucky you'll see (and hear) an icefall, as

sections crack off the glacier and splash into the water. Then small groups hike with a guide onto the frozen plateau, marveling at the variety of the topography: crevasses, caves, and moulins streaming with meltwater. hieloyaventura.com

—J.K.R.



11 a.m.





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NAMIBIA

Midday brings high hopes, and high temperatures, during a hunt for ancient rock art on "Burning Mountain"

By Mark Jenkins
Photographs by
Matt Moyer

12 p.m.



NAMIBIA

Unusual geology and extraordinary rock art make the Brandberg massif a hot spot for adventure-minded locals like guide Basil Calitz.



Brandberg mountain is burning.

A remorseless globe of sun is scalding the sky. Rocks scattered on the mountain are too hot to touch. Shade is the only shield from oppression.

I'm three hours into climbing Namibia's remote Brandberg mountain with my guides, Angula Shipahu and his 24-year-old son, Thomas—and the gorge we're ascending, the Ga'aseb, on the south side of this solid monolith of granite, is a steep, treeless avenue of boulders. Finally we stop to rest in the shadow

of a house-size rock, shrug off our heavy packs, and collapse. It's too hot to talk. We just lie on our backs, close our eyes, and guzzle water.

Brandberg means “fire mountain” in German and the local Afrikaans, a literal translation of the tribal Damara name, Dâures. The appellation wasn't inspired by the scorching temperatures but by the glowing scarlet color of the massif first at sunrise, then at sunset. Geologically, the almost perfectly circular formation some 20 miles in diameter is one of the most unusual mountains on Earth, a product of the splitting of the ancient continent of Gondwana into the southern continents we know today. As the rift caused by South America's separation from Africa widened, it produced isolated intrusions of rock, including today's granitic Brandberg massif, which rises above the surrounding desert and is crowned by Namibia's highest point, the 8,550-foot-high Königstein (“king's stone”).

I think we've stopped here because it's the largest patch of shade Angula can find. But when I raise my salt-stung eyelids, I spot a painting on the rock wall above us. An arrow of excitement pierces me. This is why I've come so far: Brandberg's



ancient rock paintings. I stand to study the ancient artwork. Two tall, naked men chase a bounding springbok. The lead runner appears to have tossed behind him his bow and quiver of arrows, which the second runner is about to catch in midair, and is reaching out for the springbok's tail. All three figures are finely drawn in red ocher on a canyon wall of russet-colored granite. The image is so simple and yet so dramatically descriptive. Here is the elemental survival story of all early humans: the hunt.

Angula, a man with an inscrutable face that transforms briefly when he smiles, is pleased to see how the picture captivates me. He instructs his son (Angula doesn't speak English) to inform me that an even better painting waits close by, if I'm willing to hike some more. I consider. My two guides are lean, muscled men who blithely walk vast distances in insufferable heat. Still, I'm game.

We leave our packs and zigzag up the slanting wall of the canyon. I follow directly behind Angula, who, at 61, remains agile and sure-footed. We surmount rock shelves perched on delicate ribs of stone, our boots angled on the sloping surface, then cut back beneath a low overhang. Angula gets down on his hands and knees and crawls into a cave. I follow. Inside he points up. On a concave wall just a few feet from my face, I make out a rock painting. Three human figures wearing headdresses as well as bracelets are approaching a white giraffe that wears an ornamented crown. Each figure's torso is decorated, one striped, one splotched with white, one—perhaps a female—with what looks like a snake in her belly. The giraffe appears to stand under a shower of rain. I theorize that the men are honoring the giraffe and celebrating the rain. Which makes complete sense. Lying in the cave, the sun and searing heat just a few feet away, I easily can imagine a hunter hiding out here, deeply in need of rain and game and attentively painting this scene.

I HAD BEEN TOLD DECEMBER was the wrong time to travel around northern Namibia.

"You do know it's summer here," an in-country contact had informed me by phone as I sat in my office in Laramie, Wyoming. "It can be extremely dry; temperatures reach 50 degrees." That's Celsius. Equivalent to 122 degrees Fahrenheit. Gazing out my window at a winter-white landscape, which just that morning I'd cross-country skied along, I couldn't fathom that sort of heat.

The weather that greets me when I arrive in Namibia's capital, Windhoek, is pleasant—temperately warm and a bit rainy. It won't last. A five-hour drive north the following day to the edge of the Namib Desert (the last 75 miles on dirt road) brings me to the isolated outpost of Uis. I'm in the middle of

Damaraland, a region of rocky hills, gorges, and expanses of sand where a number of tribes—including the Damara, the Himba, and the Ovambo—eke out a scrappy living in the desert scrub. The air conditioning has been blasting the entire drive, so when I open the car door and step out, it feels like opening an oven and stepping in.

Determined to not let the temperature discomfit me, I walk briskly into the Brandberg Rest Camp, a sort of motel with camping options, and ask for proprietor Basil Calitz.

Calitz and I had corresponded by email; he was the only person of some two dozen I'd contacted who'd said visiting the Brandberg was possible this time of year. Insane, maybe, but possible. He'd set me up with the man who discovered many of the paintings, Ovambo legend Angula Shipahu.

"Mr. Calitz is off property," says one of his staff, "but will be here later."

I hang out at the rest camp's pool for the remainder of the day, trying to acclimate. At dusk Calitz roars up on a rugged dirt bike. He is a massive man, with a big beard, big belly, and big voice. Wearing articulated black leathers dusted in desert talc, his giant helmet under his arm, he resembles some sort of Visigoth.

He claps me on the back, shakes my hand up and down vigorously, and calls for two pints.

"So you found Uis," he booms. "What do you think of it?"

"Reminds me of a ghost town in the Arizona desert," I reply.

Calitz, whose beard and hair are so long and intertwined that it's hard to tell where one begins and the other ends, quaffs his stein of beer, wipes his mustache, orders another stein, and gives me

his personal history of Uis.

Founded in 1960 by a South African firm, Uis began as a tin-mining company town, Calitz explains. Tiny brick homes were built on the east side for the black miners and more spacious accommodations on the west side for the white administrators. During apartheid, South Africa couldn't buy tin on the world market because of international sanctions, so it mined it here, at a loss. Some 85,000 tons of rock would be gouged out of deep strip mines, according to Calitz, and processed to produce just 1.4 tons of tin. In 1990, about the time apartheid—and its UN-imposed sanctions—ended, the mine was closed, leaving hundreds of native workers without jobs. Though they had homes here, Calitz says, the absence of employment drove many back to goat herding and occasional poaching. Seven years later a Namibian businessman bought the mine, its equipment, and the abandoned white side of town and began advertising Uis in Europe as a vacation community.

"Germans, Austrians, French, Swiss, Italians, they could buy a vacation home here for 3,000 euros," explains Calitz, lighting another cigarette. "They only come for three months a year."



Giraffes painted centuries ago decorate a rock face at Tiara Shelter, a Brandberg site that also offers relief from the powerful noonday sun.

"Do you even have winter?" I ask, using my sleeve to towel the sweat off my face.

"Of course," he bellows. "It came on a Tuesday last year."

A third-generation Namibian and jubilant bachelor who has worked as a photographer and a roof thatcher, Calitz, 56, bought the dilapidated Brandberg Rest Camp—which originally was Uis's recreation center, with a pool and indoor badminton courts—with a few partners in 1995.

"The place just touched my heart," he says. "I knew this was where I wanted to spend the rest of my life."

The following morning he gives me a bouncy tour of the town and its residents in his Land Cruiser. We pass the strip mine—now a reservoir of green water where a retired electrical engineer has started a tilapia fish farm—and the local hardware store, operated by a former harbor captain whose tools sit dry-docked. I meet a grizzled, chain-smoking prospector named Lorri who still searches for the El Dorado of amethysts and plays blues guitar; and Louis Geldenhuys, who was a member of the first team of Namibians to relocate endangered black rhinos—and to cut off a rhino's horn to protect it from poachers.

Extreme places attract unusual people.

"This town is a magnet for the weird and wonderful," Calitz exclaims.

BECAUSE OF THE HEAT on Brandberg's rocky surface, Angola, Thomas, and I hike only for half-hour stretches before taking shelter beneath available boulders. Even they admit it's hot. Adding to our challenge is the weight of our packs. The Brandberg has experienced drought conditions, and Angola hadn't been sure we'd find water. So we each carry 12 quarts—the equivalent of 25 pounds—along with our camping supplies for a week.

Reaching 6,000 feet, we stumble onto the vast granite openness of a plateau-like area. We're surrounded by miles of undulating rock and rounded boulders. It's so hot that the granite itself, red in the angling sun, appears burnt—a devil's desert of stone.

The heat begins to abate with the approach of dusk. We search for water in surrounding potholes, known locally as the Longi Pools. One after another is bone dry, ringed only with salt. Angola looks concerned. If we don't find water, we'll be forced to head back down tomorrow.

We walk to the end of a granite spillway and come upon a solitary pothole. Ten feet down it I spy a foot of rainwater filled

with moss and minnows. The stuff looks nasty, but it's water. We tie a line to my cup, drop it into the hole, fill it, pull it back up, and pump the green liquid through a filter into our plastic jugs.

That night a breeze kicks in and carries the heat away. The rocks around us are almost luminescent beneath a southern sky crowded with stars. We hear the deep humphing sound of a leopard breathing. We make a campfire, around which I learn about Angola's life.

For eight years, from 1977 to 1985, Angola lived on the Brandberg, descending only every few months for supplies. He had been hired to find rock paintings by an Austrian artist named Harald Pager, who migrated to South Africa after World War II and would spend two years photographing rock art in that nation's Drakensberg, or "dragon mountains." At the time much of Brandberg's rock art was undiscovered. To find new works, Pager engaged locals, including Angola, who had never even been on the mountain. Pager paid them for each artwork they





Damaraland dwellings: Guest suites at Mowani Mountain Camp, north of Brandberg mountain, merge with the rocks around them.

discovered—less than the tin mine paid, but Angula realized he had a talent for finding paintings. Even during the searing heat of summer, he would crawl into every cave and peer under every boulder in search of the art of a vanished tribe.

“When I found a rock painting,” Angula said (with Thomas translating), “Pager was pleased.”

Weathering had faded many of the artworks, so rather than photograph them, Pager traced them on paper. It proved to be painstakingly slow work, but, Angula says, Pager was obsessed.

“He would trace from six in the morning until three the following morning, sleep for three hours, then resume tracing. He hardly ate, and drank only a half quart of water a day.” Pager’s appetite, Angula adds, was for cigarettes and coffee.

After some eight years on his knees tracing images, Pager

died in 1985. Astonishingly he had recorded some 40,000 drawings at almost a thousand sites, filling more than four miles’ worth of tracing paper. These are now collected in a six-volume set published by Germany’s University of Cologne, each tome the size and thickness of an atlas. Because of Pager and his band of local art hunters, Brandberg mountain is recognized as the home of one of the largest collections of rock art in the world. The entire mountain is an alfresco art gallery.

WE GET GOING BEFORE DAWN the next morning, scrambling between boulders while the air still is cool. This is the only time I can recall ever dreading sunrise. We hike swiftly, covering as much ground as possible before heat blankets the landscape. Angula has hiked this trail hundreds of times; he could walk it with his eyes closed. Along the way we spot distinctive piles of leopard and hyena scat.

Angula is guiding me to the site of one of the finest works of aboriginal rock art anywhere: the Snake Rock cave. Its entrance isn’t immediately obvious—if you didn’t know it was there, you’d walk right by it. We duck our heads and slip inside. I’m expecting a few paintings. What I see shocks me—a wide panel of giraffes, elephants, snakes, kudu, springbok, hartebeests, zebras, and humans.

According to an expert on Brandberg’s art, German archaeologist Tilman Lenssen-Erz, the images range from 2,000 to 4,000 years old, painted by hunter-gatherers who likely were ancestors of the present-day Bushmen,

or San people. White tints may have been made with ostrich eggshells, yellow with yellow ocher, black with charcoal and manganese ore. Red paint was crafted from red ocher mixed, perhaps, with animal blood. The thinnest lines may have been drawn with tiny bird bones, thicker lines with feathers, and brushstrokes with animal fur. Humans and big game animals are the primary motifs.

I make out slender human figures who are striding or leaping, praising or praying. Lenssen-Erz has noted that the depictions “focus on community, equality, and mobility, propagating the ideal of a person without rank, status, age, or sex.” Men, who bear bows, arrows, and other implements, are connected to the material world; women are associated with communication and communal ceremonies.

The paintings were integral to the lives of hunter-gatherers, central to their religious rites, healing ceremonies, and social interactions. Since Bushmen had no written language, their

A full-page photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sky is a vibrant, glowing orange, filled with numerous small, bright yellow-orange spots that appear to be reflections on sand or small plants. In the foreground, several dark, skeletal camel thorn trees are silhouetted against the bright sky. The trees have thick, gnarled trunks and bare, branching structures. The ground is a flat, light-colored surface, possibly sand or salt flats, which reflects the orange light from the sky. The overall mood is serene and dramatic, capturing the unique beauty of the Namib-Naukluft Park.

A huge sand dune glows orange in the desert sun of Namib-Naukluft Park, silhouetting skeletal camel thorn trees. See more about Namib-Naukluft on page 42.



pictographs represent their deep knowledge and awareness of their environment and presumably offered one way to pass that wisdom to future generations.

I study the Snake Rock panel for more than an hour. It's a hallucinatory palimpsest of images: animals overlapping humans, humans crossing through the ghostly bodies of animals. The exquisite anatomical accuracy with which the animals are drawn astonishes me, from the protruding shoulders of a giraffe to the clean stripes on a zebra's nose, reflecting a highly developed sense of aesthetics. All these beasts lived on the plain far below; the painters had to hike up with the exact images in their minds. These people clearly understood—and cherished—their world.

ANGULA WILL LEAD ME to more rock art sites on Brandberg, including an obscure painting he hasn't visited in 32 years. I wonder how he will find it in what to me seems an undifferentiated landscape. What Angula does floors me: He navigates by recognizing individual boulders from tens of thousands of look-alikes, by remembering the aspect of the slope and the position of the sun, and by recalling how long it took to walk how far. Like the ancient painters, he has memorized the Brandberg's geomorphology.

Angula walks so smoothly, he appears to glide over the rock, conserving every drop of energy. He weaves left, right, finding the line of least resistance and never lifting his foot higher than necessary. I step where he steps, trying to mimic his ethereal efficiency. Without a stumble he leads me to the painting of an archer in pursuit.

We visit half a dozen additional sites, with paintings that have been viewed only a handful of times in millennia: groups of animals, a line of six dancing men, an ibex with enormous curled horns, three men with loopy legs, as if they're being blown by the wind. With no water source visible anywhere, we return to our camp every night.

The evening before we hike out, we decide we must leave some water at our campsite for the next visitor. Once again we tie my cup to a string, carefully lower it into the hole, and draw up the liquid of life.

Drought may have contributed to the Bushmen's departure from the Brandberg some thousand years ago. The rains they depict in their paintings, soaking the giraffes and elephants, vanished. The climate changed, becoming hotter and more dry. Water holes evaporated, causing game animals to migrate.

It must have been apocalyptic for the Bushmen. They appear to have abandoned their Dâures homeland, forever forsaking their paintings—today invaluable visual scriptures of an ancient culture and vanished era.

Writer and climber MARK JENKINS is the author of the 2007 book A Man's Life: Dispatches From Dangerous Places. Photographer MATT MOYER (@mattmoyerphoto) has traveled to Iraq, the Sinai Peninsula, and Saratoga, New York, for National Geographic.



Namibia, Naturally

WORLD-CLASS ROCK ART

Brandberg National Monument

Centered around the Brandberg massif, this protected area established in 1951 encompasses Namibia's highest peak, thousands of rock paintings, and habitat frequented seasonally by elephants, antelope, and the occasional black rhino. Area lodgings include the low-key, easygoing Brandberg Rest Camp (guest rooms, dorm beds, campsites; from \$7 per person); the Brandberg White Lady Lodge (chalets, guest rooms, tents, campsites; from \$51); and the homey Uis White Lady Guest House and Camp Site (rooms from \$50).

WILD WETLANDS

Dorob National Park

Marked by a belt of coastal dunes and home to one of Africa's most important wetlands, Walvis Bay lagoon, Dorob National Park lies just southwest of Brandberg mountain. The nutrient-rich Benguela Current feeds Walvis Bay, which attracts flamingos, pelicans, and many shorebird species. Also spotted offshore: dolphins, orcas, and humpback whales. The town of Walvis Bay sits just outside the park and offers a range of lodgings along with birding, kayaking, and boat tours.

DESERTS AND DUNES

Namib-Naukluft Park

Weathered mountains and sand-swept desert define the landscape of one of Africa's largest protected areas. Extending east from Walvis Bay, Namib-Naukluft is known for the much photographed salt pan called Sossusvlei. Other highlights include towering dunes tinged red, thanks to oxidizing iron; rugged Sesriem Canyon; and such desert-adapted creatures as black-backed jackals, giraffes, mountain zebras, and baboons.

SHIPWRECK SHORE

Skeleton Coast Park

Many consider this Namibia's most remote—and most mind-bending—terrain, a land lapped by the Atlantic Ocean yet bone dry. Once littered with whale skeletons (left by a defunct whaling industry), the coast now draws the intrepid with its "singing" sand dunes, colonies of Cape fur seals, caches of raw agates and garnets, wrecks of ships that were ambushed by treacherous offshore rocks and frequent banks of fog—and a profound isolation.

Go With Nat Geo

Explore Namibia on the 14-day National Geographic Expedition "Namibia Culture and Wildlife Adventure." For more details please visit: natgeoexpeditions.com.



AMAZON ——— ANDES ——— PACIFIC COAST ——— GALAPAGOS

You will walk along a fantasy, along a path of life, in the islands where the idea of the evolution arose. Where, arisen from the lava of the volcanoes, a unique mixture of species coexists: tortoises, penguins, flamingos, blue-footed boobies, marine iguanas, seals and anything you can imagine. Because Ecuador is the only country in which wherever you gaze you will find yourself amidst the most diverse Amazon of the world, the breathtaking Andes Mountains and kilometers of golden sand within the blink of an eye. Welcome to this party of life and contrasts that can only happen in the nearest country to the Sun.

**ALL YOU
NEED IS
ECUADOR
-TRAVEL**





1 p.m.

CHARLESTON

Gear up for Gullah and Low Country culture on this South Carolina road trip from Charleston to Pawleys Island

While Charleston's velveteen charms have been luring visitors for centuries, a drive north on Highway 17 up to Pawleys Island reveals a much wilder stretch of coastline—including Waccamaw Neck, or the Neck, for short—that owes its heritage to the enslaved West Africans who worked the rice fields on nearby plantations (which produced 80 million pounds annually in the South Carolina-Georgia region during the 18th century), and to their descendants, who continue to keep the Gullah traditions alive. If Charleston is the Low Country's historic headquarters, the Neck is its spiritual heart, and a rich vein for cultural exploration; meet basket makers, wood-carvers, soul food cooks, fishermen, museum guides, and living heritage experts. And now, thanks to widened bridges, improved roads, and the opening of a second hotel on Pawleys Island, the rice corridor is ripe for a long weekend. —JESSICA MISCHNER





STOP 3

Soul Food Fuel

Signs for Buckshot's Restaurant start a few miles south of McClellanville, but nobody around here needs reminding that this family-owned diner serves up some of the best soul food. It has survived Hurricane Hugo and the recent death of its patriarch, and the Colleton family soldiers on. Go for the fried crabs and fish with a side of red rice, but don't even think about leaving without an order of the signature brownie-like chewies.

STOP 4

Memory Lanes

Both Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt slept in the plush guest rooms of the former Georgetown County estate, now Hobcaw Barony, a 16,000-acre wildlife sanctuary and living history museum. The property's prominent attraction is Friendfield, a Gullah village inhabited from colonial days until the early 1950s. Preserved down to the streets, church, doctor's office, and dwellings, it's the area's last intact collection of its kind.

STOP 5

Time to Nest

In 2011, Atlantans Bruce and Corinne Taylor reopened the Pelican Inn, a Pawleys Island landmark built in the 1840s by African-American carpenter Renty Tucker, as an eight-room hotel and restaurant. Buffered by the island's tallest dune and an ancient maritime forest, the inn is one of just two on-island hotels, and the very definition of low-key: seagulls, outdoor showers, and slamming screen doors make up the soundtrack here.

STOP 6

Stick Around

Thomas Williams is unique among the roadside entrepreneurs along Highway 17 for two reasons. First, he's a man, and second, he crafts walking sticks and staffs, not baskets, something he's done since he retired. His great-grandfather was an enslaved carpenter who outfitted injured workers with canes and crutches. Turned by hand from curved vines and tree roots, Williams's creations are prized for their easy grip and durability.

STOP 7

Island Life

Round out the trip at unspoiled Sandy Island, settled around 1860 by a former slave. Roughly 75 families live here year-round, but visitors can pop over by boat to explore the 9,000 acres of conservation land and bird-watching trails. A hospitality industry is also taking root among residents: Rommy Pyatt offers guided "Tours de Sandy Island," and Laura Herriott hosts meals and overnight stays in her home, Wilma Cottage.



2 p.m.

PORTLAND

Get below
the surface of
Oregon's offbeat,
beer-loving city

Portland's reputation for the odd and unusual isn't new. It turns out that the Oregon city's eccentricity goes way back—long before the Voodoo Doughnut shop and nude bike festivals. The Underground Portland tour, by Portland Walking Tours, leads visitors along the streets of Old Town Chinatown and then underground to the walled-off entrances to the legendary "Portland Shanghai Tunnels" below the former Merchant Hotel. Guides tell stories of how loners were "shanghaied" here (kidnapped and sold into slavery by saloon owners). They provide a glimpse of Portland's quirks beyond an afternoon walking and gawking along Alberta Street. portlandwalkingtours.com —J.K.R.



down in the ocean, and hitching a ride on a whale shark in the Galápagos—those are wows that you can't find on the moon.

DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO KEEP EXPLORING, NO MATTER WHAT YOUR AGE?

Of course I do. I'm exploring things far, far away right now and trying to pin down some orbits in space that go by Mars. I'll never make it to Mars, but hopefully in a generation or two, people will be able to make that trip. That's an exciting trip for me, but it's all a mental trip.

HOW CAN WE CREATE A COLONY ON MARS?

I've realized that we have to get fuel from the moon, and then use natural orbital routes to help us get to Mars. Then, in order to build a village or a base on Mars, we should design and build the same base on the moon so we can learn exactly how to do that in our backyard. We can't have people just visiting Mars; the real purpose should be to inhabit it. If we make the transportation relatively accessible, then more of us will be able to get there.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SPACE FOOD?

Not very much tasted good, but there were really small shrimp with sauce that I liked. These shrimp had to be freeze-dried, then you'd put water in them and have to squeeze the shrimp through this tube that was in your mouth. And for that to taste good, that's quite a task. —HANNAH SHEINBERG



3 p.m.

MARS!

Buzz Aldrin, one of humankind's first moonwalkers, talks about launching his hopes toward the red planet

Buzz Aldrin is over the moon. The astronaut and author of National Geographic's new book *No Dream Is Too High* has been orbiting the idea of bringing humans to Mars. When he's not setting his sights on outer space, he's scuba diving around Earth for another kind of antigravity adventure.

AFTER BEING IN SPACE, DOES ANYTHING ELSE WOW YOU IN YOUR TRAVELS?

A quick tour of the *Titanic* a couple miles

“WOW...”



Kimberly M, Virginia

Cueva Ventana, Arecibo

I'd heard about this place and told myself that I'd go during my next trip to PR. I made that trip a reality and am SO glad I did. It is absolutely AMAZING! The photos don't do it justice...
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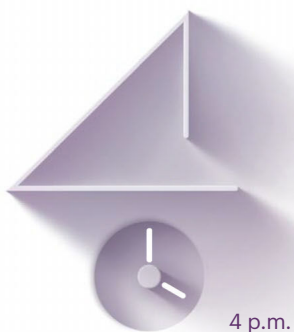
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CROATIA

A new adventure sport turns snorkelers into gear-light backpackers in the Adriatic



4 p.m.

On a sea trek in Croatia, afternoons spent snorkeling or hiking along the Adriatic coast flow into evenings sleeping on a beach under the stars. Without a kayak or boat, sea trekkers carry their gear in an inflatable

waterproof backpack that trails behind as they swim to the day's destination. This new adventure sport combines backpacking, free diving, and fin-swimming and was developed by German free diver Bernhard Wache. He

also leads trips to Elba, Cinque Terre, Sardinia, and Corsica. "With sea trekking you face a life without a lot of possessions," Wache says. "All you have are the things you really need." aetern.de/en

—LOIS PARSHLEY



Bars and yakitori restaurants cluster near the Shinjuku train station, in Tokyo.

TOKYO

Happy hour in Japan means it's time to seek out some sake. *Kanpai!*



5 p.m.

Exports of Japanese sake to the United States have grown in recent years to nearly \$34 million annually, especially of higher-end, higher-priced sake. Create your own special sake happy hour in Tokyo to learn about and taste the wealth of options. Start at Nihonshu Stand Moto, a standing bar in Shinjuku well known among sake lovers, where you can choose from among the offerings on the handwritten menu. Next head over to Kuri in Ginza, with more than a hundred types of sake, including weekly changing seasonal selections. Both spots have sake sommeliers to provide expert advice. sake-talk.com —J.K.R.

THE DESERT IS WILD

Absolutely
untamed.



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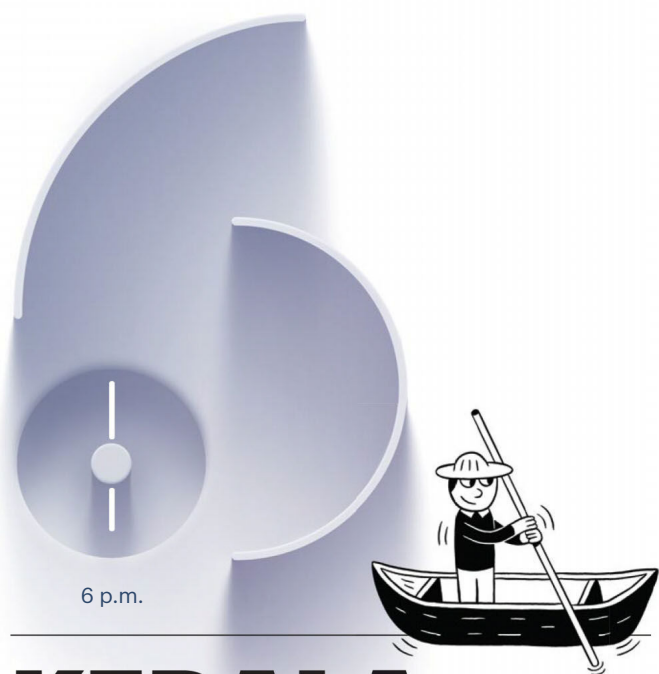


A boater returns home at the end of the day along the backwaters of Kerala, India.



Dusk

If dawn is awakening and daytime is illumination, then twilight is transcendence, a final burst of vitality before darkness falls.



6 p.m.

KERALA

Sunset in India sets off a series of rituals **BY GEORGE W. STONE**

On Kakkathuruthu, a tiny island in Kerala's tangled backwaters, children leap into shallow pools. Women in saris head home in skiffs. Fishermen light lamps and cast nets into the lagoon. Bats swoop across the horizon snapping up moths, and the emerald-fringed "island of crows"—the English translation of the Malayalam name for this sandy spot along the Malabar Coast—embraces night.

I'm in the prow of a fishing boat piloted by a Hindu man wearing a pressed Oxford shirt and a creased dhoti. He moves methodically, expertly paddling and occasionally standing to punt with a bamboo pole. Around me, flotillas of water hyacinths, their purple flowers catching the last light, drift atop Vembanad Lake, coalescing into temporary islands before shifting currents carry them away to the rivers that eventually flow through deltas into the Indian Ocean.

Three friends have joined me on this cruise. We arrived by motorboat at our island cottage a day after Christmas, on our way from the tea highlands of Munnar to the ancient city of Kochi, which was for centuries the heart of the Indian spice trade. Regional cuisine celebrates this heritage in piquant curries made with cinnamon, mustard seed, and grated coconut, served on banana leaves lined with tangy chutneys. By request, our Keralan breakfast includes a glass of toddy, which we saw being collected by the local toddy tapper, a sinewy man who shimmies up palm trees to extract the sap that becomes palm wine. When fresh, this cloudy drink offers a sweetly

soporific effect—nap juice of the highest order—enough to send us all snoozing until sundown. We awake just in time to pile into our dugout and ply the lagoon.

In Kerala the waters give life, but life flourishes on land. Seen from the lagoon, the world presents itself as a pantomime, vivid but remote. Boys drag their goats from one grassy knoll to the next. Girls bicycle along dirt paths beside the lagoon. Rattan houseboats freighted with tourists pass by quietly (though not as quietly as they did before air-conditioning). Birds dart across the sky, ducking and diving among reeds, catching dragonflies on the fly. As twilight turns to dusk, a shirtless man lifts a weir to change the flow of water into his shrimp bed. Village temples pipe devotional music through loudspeakers, casting Hindu sound waves across Vembanad Lake in a nightly mash-up with a muezzin's call to prayer. The water's surface reflects pink-gold billows of cloud and stoic palm trees that seem to have sprung from *The Lorax*.

"The perfume of Kerala is woodsmoke," says my friend Ali Potia, who grew up in Mumbai, more than a thousand miles north. "The nightly ritual of dusk involves hearths being lit, women cooking, and men going to the toddy shop." I have pressed Potia into service as cultural interpreter on this voyage, a task he has undertaken with aplomb.

Kerala, he tells me, is an anomaly in India—and the world. This small, traditionally matrilineal state has a high literacy rate; a low birthrate; vibrant and vociferous cultural, intellectual and political traditions; and a Marxist ruling party. Campaign posters typically feature a hammer and sickle beside female candidates wearing printed saris.

Our boat glides onward. The "land of coconuts" is aptly named. After a few scenic eddies, our captain steers us straight to the toddy shop, where the same coconut-palm sap that lulled us to sleep in the morning has fermented in the heat and built up a knockout blow. How many trees must a toddy tapper tap to tease out the sap that entwines our minds? We ask, but no one remembers. All we know is that the toddy tappers in Kerala are busy men, indeed.

Skimming the lake gives the feeling of floating above the world, a feeling reinforced by our inverted reflection in the water. I've somehow switched roles with our pilot, who sits serenely at the bow of the boat while I paddle back to our cottage. A chorus of bullfrogs has drowned out the temple tunes, lotus flowers have closed, and our glowing passage into the gloaming has concluded. Dusk gradually blots out the light in the sky so that all that remains are shades of cobalt and a few scattered, emerg-

ing stars. By the time we reach the dock, candles are lit to welcome us home. We stumble ashore. This is how the day ends on Kakkathuruthu: our path illuminated, our spirits roused to the promise of night.

Dusk is Traveler Editor in Chief **GEORGE W. STONE's** favorite time of day. Follow him: [@travelerstone](#).

GO WITH NAT GEO

National Geographic Journeys' "South India: Explore Kerala" itinerary paddles the backwaters. Visit [natgeojourneys.com](#).

A couple is sitting on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a vast valley. The man is wearing a plaid shirt and a blue cap, and the woman is wearing a blue shirt and a backpack. The valley below is filled with green trees and yellow flowers, and the sky is a mix of blue and purple. The text "Let the magic find you." is written in a white, cursive font in the upper left corner.

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The Church of San Lázaro in Rincón gleams as a place of pilgrimage in Cuba.



CUBA

Havana wakes up as the sun goes down

When the sun dips behind Havana's crumbling façades and the mercury drops to a bearable number, residents head outdoors. Narrow streets become soccer fields, front steps turn into living rooms, and when tourists sprint to famed spots like the Tropicana Club, locals flock to the Malecón. Walk along this five-mile esplanade and you'll feel as if you've stumbled upon a world music festival. A man playing a six-stringed *tres* serenades lovers while others dance the rumba as a classic car rolls by, "La Cucaracha" sounding as its horn. Grab a sweet treat from the nearby Coppelia ice-cream parlor, or snack on roasted peanuts sold in white paper bouquets as you stroll the thoroughfare. Habaneros are ever eager to teach visitors a few steps of the *danzón*, so don't hesitate to cut in and dance away the day's heat. —JEANNETTE KIMMEL

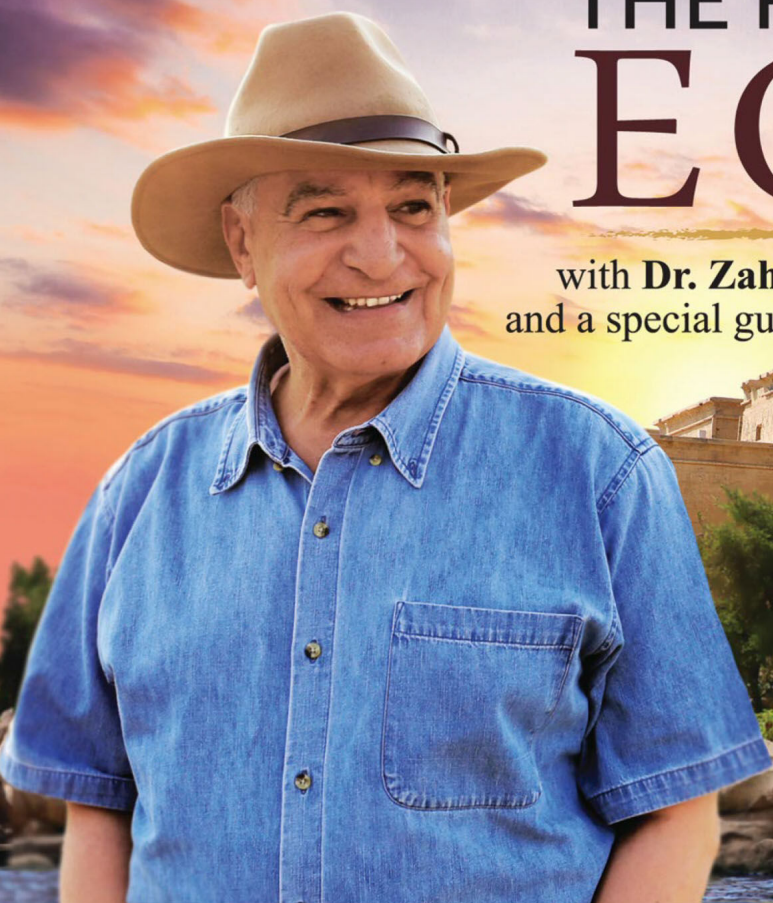
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Afro-Cuban music expert Carol Steele leads several of National Geographic's "Cuba: Discovering Its People and Culture" trips. Dive into Cuban culture with her, or join other experts on our new expedition to this Caribbean island, "Cuba by Land and Sea: Cultural Heritage and Natural Wonders." For more, visit natgeoexpeditions.com.

7 p.m.

THE ROYAL TOUR TO EGYPT

with **Dr. Zahi Hawass**, the legendary archaeologist
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Dr. Zahi Hawass: *"No one can tour Egypt like this. Except for you – when you come and join me. You'll be treated like royalty, this is why we call it the Royal Tour."*

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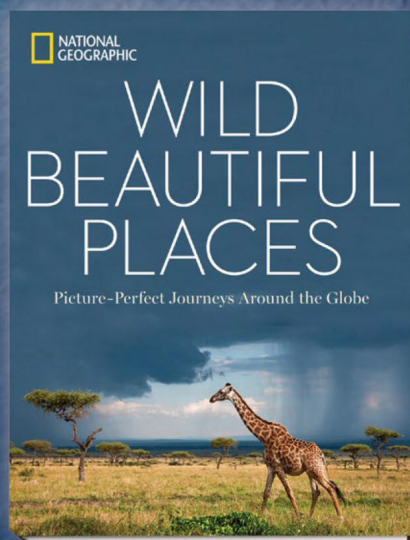
Mrs. Jehan Sadat

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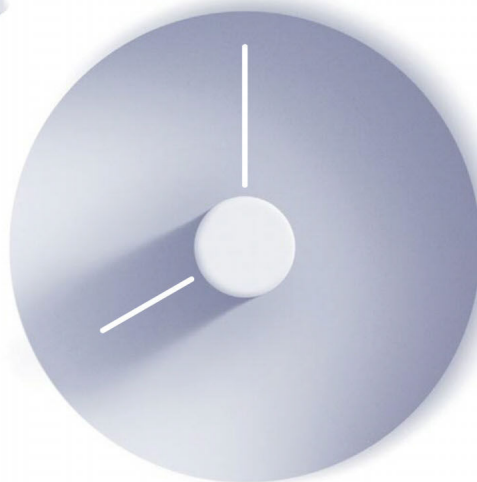


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NEW YORK CITY



Whether uptown,
downtown, or in
Brooklyn, no other
place makes night
shine brighter

By Tara Isabella Burton
Photographs by Jonno Rattman

8 p.m.





NEW YORK CITY

In New York—here looking
north over Battery Park—
"nothing is ever really
closed," says author Burton.

There are many

A carnival spirit reigns at House of Yes, a warehouse turned performance venue in Bushwick, Brooklyn.



PREVIOUS PAGES: GEORGE STEINMETZ (AERIAL SHOT)

New Yorks.



There is one city for the young, another for the old. There's the city for the newly arrived, the established, the broke, the rich. That's the beauty of it.

Or so says Joe—he never gives me his last name—whom I met exactly five minutes ago. He has already bought me a drink and, in the great tradition of New York brashness, told me his life story. He grew up penniless in a Queens tenement, worked his way up, became a diplomat, moved to London, became wealthy, grew accustomed to frequenting bars like this one: Bemelmans at the Carlyle Hotel, perhaps the last bastion of Upper East Side, Edith Wharton-style elegance.

"Timmy," Joe asks the red-jacketed bartender, "how long have I been coming here?"

Timmy shrugs.

Joe likes talking to strangers. He likes hearing their stories. He likes listening to jazz, and drinking champagne, and looking at the murals on the bar wall—by Ludwig Bemelmans, writer and illustrator of the *Madeline* books—marveling at this place he never thought he'd one day be able to afford.

But most of all, Joe likes New York. "You can be anybody here," he says. "Jane can come here and be a movie star. She can come here and be a transvestite. Anything you want!"

Returning to New York after a decade abroad, I found myself in a city at once foreign and still, indelibly, the one I knew as a child growing up on the Upper East Side. But I'd never tried to do what my 13-year-old self had always longed to do: stay out until sunrise and have that one perfect night I'd dreamed of, the kind of night bohemian Greenwich Village poet Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote of, staying out "very tired" and "very merry" until dawn.

I draft a wish list. It ends up being so lengthy that I realize right away that my perfect night is actually several nights. And, as I come to learn, the most New York of moments is the one you don't expect.

ONE OF MY NIGHTS TAKES ME FROM THE CARLYLE to the Bow Tie cinema in Chelsea, New York's fabled gay district, where a lime-wigged drag queen named Hedda Lettuce emcees a showing of camp classic *Suddenly, Last Summer*, laced with bawdy heckling from the audience. A bleached-blond mother with a Betty Boop voice rushes up to Hedda afterward to get an autograph for her eight-year-old. "He wants to be just like you when he grows up," she says. She's been collecting every drag queen autograph she can find, she says. She knows her son is different from the other boys at school; she wants to show him that there are people



in this city—in this world—who can make him feel less alone.

Another night, I head back to Chelsea for the monthly Supercinema party at the McKittrick Hotel. This formerly abandoned hotel has been repurposed as a Hitchcockian theater space for British company Punchdrunk’s “experiential” *Macbeth*-based *Sleep No More*. But tonight it’s all about *The Great Gatsby* at the Supercinema party. The F. Scott Fitzgerald novel is perhaps the best known retelling of New York’s capacity for inspiring self-creation and reinvention in all those who come here.

Women in feathers, headdresses, and beads line the block. A live band is playing electronic covers of jazz standards, a techno reimagining of Ella Fitzgerald under a green strobe light. Two girls have come as the twin eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg. Anywhere else, I think, they might look out of place. Not here.

THE MORE OF NEW YORK I SEE AT NIGHT, the more I realize is still strange to me, even after most of a lifetime here. I take a late-night bike tour with the mild-mannered George Pingeon of Bike the Big Apple. We pass places I know—or thought I knew—and he renders them unfamiliar. In the East Village, on the

street outside what used to be the legendary Second Avenue Deli (it’s a Chase Bank now, but Second Avenue Deli lives on elsewhere), Pingeon shows me the star-engraved plaques I’ve never noticed. This was Yiddish theater’s answer to Hollywood’s Walk of Fame, where a new wave of immigrants found the freedom to make art of their own.

At Madison Square Park I learn that the limestone-clad Met Life Tower was once the tallest in the world, one of five New York buildings to hold that distinction. Just another example of New York culture, Pingeon says, in a city constantly striving for perfection, constantly one-upping itself.

I stop by a comedy competition at the Peoples Improv Theater and watch as eight unknown comics face off for a chance to perform their own material. Later I hop over to the

West Village to the craft-cocktail basement bar Slowly Shirley. The cocktail waitress, my friend Kayla Ferguson, leads a double life: slinging Sazeracs for money, acting in guest spots on TV shows like *Boardwalk Empire* for love. She makes a port-based cocktail, tells me about her upcoming auditions, her hunger for that big break that could happen any day. It’s those fortuitous moments, ripe





Vintage New York, from left: 24-hour Ukrainian diner Veselka in the East Village; red neon at Smith's Bar in Midtown,

with the promise of the next big thing, that make New York so addictive.

I head to Harlem, to Ginny's Supper Club, a red-lit jazz bar in the basement of chef Marcus Samuelsson's Red Rooster, the contemporary comfort food restaurant credited with sparking, in part, Harlem's culinary regeneration. Yet at Ginny's, the atmosphere is less trendy than nostalgic. The decor is deco inflected, an homage to the Harlem Renaissance, when 125th Street was the cultural capital of black America. A guest vocalist—a petite woman in all black, with a timid expression and no makeup—tiptoes onto the stage. She begins to sing the 1930s hit “Deep Purple.” Her voice silences everybody. It is one of *those* voices, the kind that makes you wonder if you're at a concert people will recall, years later, as that moment when somebody made it big. Her voice is outsize, gargantuan; it shakes the barstools.

“Encore!” everybody cries, but there are no encores tonight; things move too quickly. The singer goes back to the bar and starts eating dinner while the rest of the players play. The band goes on without her.

Along 131st Street and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Boulevard,



hundreds of people are drinking, smoking in the streets, spilling all down the block. White candles illuminate the street corner. Between the candles are bottles: Moët, Ciroc. It's a funeral, I learn, for a Harlem fixture who died unexpectedly this week. His friends have come to mourn him. Some are crying; most are laughing through their tears. I stay for a while; I listen and learn snippets of his life. He was always trying to be a better man, someone says.

Much later, I watch as dawn creeps across the horizon, and I come to appreciate the stillest the city will ever get. I walk down Broadway, through streets I have never before seen empty. The sky is crimson. The police horses in Times Square are loading into their trailers. A drunk man is listening to “New York, New York” on his phone earbuds; he's stumbling and singing along.

And very tired, and very merry, I walk all the way home.

TARA ISABELLA BURTON ([@NotoriousTIB](#)) wrote about the *Oxford Canal* in our February/March 2016 issue. This is New York photographer JONNO RATTMAN's ([@jonnotherattman](#)) first feature for *Traveler*.

GREENPOINT

Start-ups, stellar dining, and Manhattan vistas in north Brooklyn **BY JACKIE SNOW**

While the HBO show *Girls* put Greenpoint on the pop culture map (Lena Dunham's character lives on India Street and hangs out at nearby Café Grumpy), this northernmost Brooklyn neighborhood has been steadily morphing from a sleepy enclave dubbed Little Poland to the type of place where Kickstarter is based. You can still pile your plate with pierogi here, but you can also dine at a Michelin-starred restaurant (Luksus) and have a drink on a boat (Brooklyn Barge) on the newly humming East River waterfront.



Known for brunch and cocktails, Nights and Weekends sits at the corner of Bedford and Nassau Avenues.



PAULIE GEE'S

Spicy honey or dried cherries top pies at this dinner-only pizzeria. Owner Paulie Giannone often makes the rounds, pouring celebratory shots of limoncello.

▼ 60 Greenpoint Ave.

TØRST

This Scandinavian-inspired bar serves beer in wine glasses. Choose from a rotating selection of pilsners and stouts on tap and 200-plus bottled varieties.

▼ 615 Manhattan Ave.

VAN LEEUWEN ICE CREAM

These locally made creamy scoops include flavors such as Earl Grey tea and salted caramel, in yummy classic and vegan styles.

▼ 620 Manhattan Ave.

TRANSMITTER PARK

Formerly home to WNYC's transmission towers, this waterfront green space overlooks the Manhattan skyline.

▼ At the end of Greenpoint Ave.

ACHILLES HEEL

Shipyard workers in the early 1900s frequented a bar on this site. Café/bar Achilles Heel nods to that history with menu items that include East Coast oysters.

▼ 180 West St.

SELAMAT PAGI

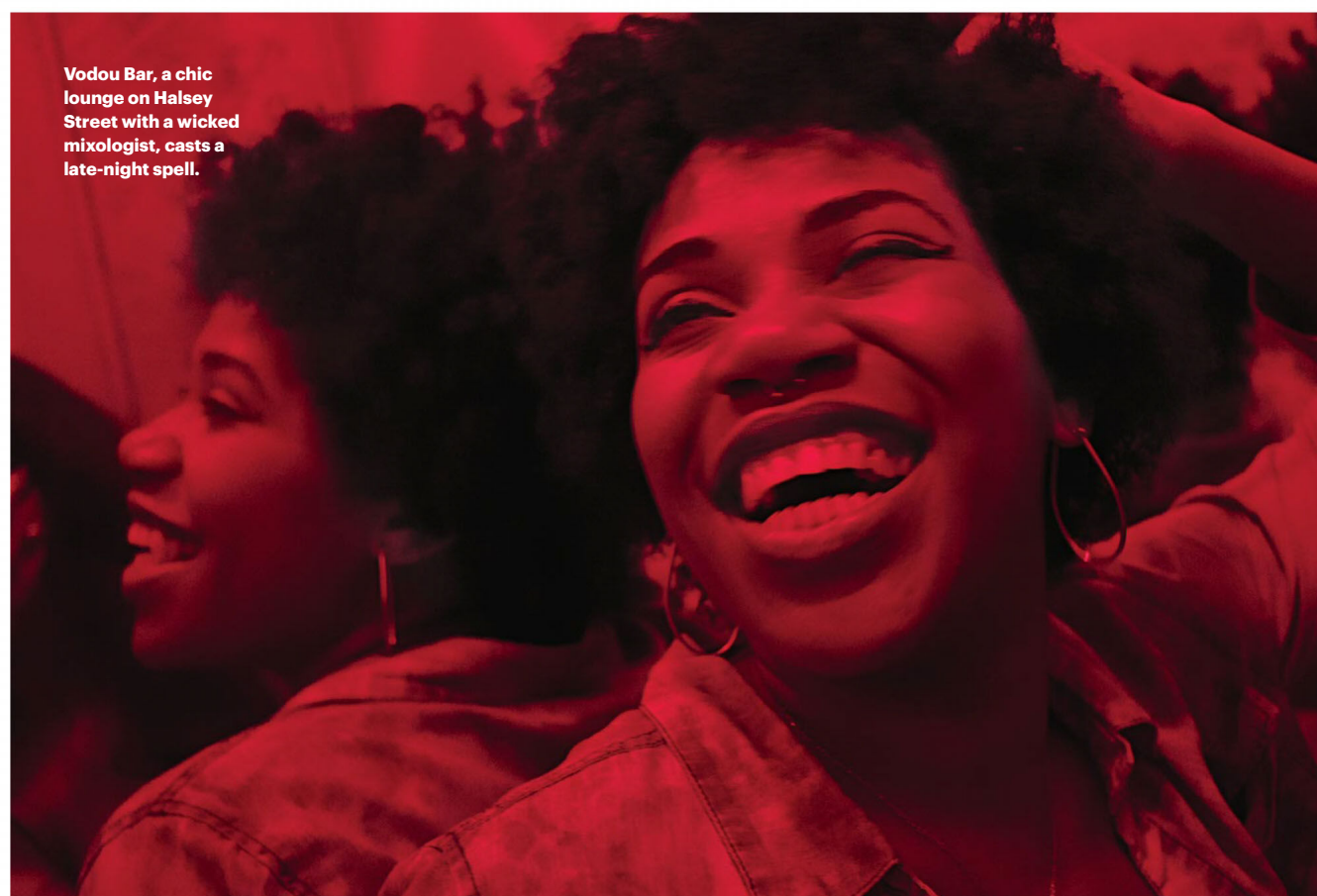
From the folks behind Van Leeuwen, this Balinese restaurant presents modern takes on traditional dishes. Favorite dessert: sticky black rice with yogurt.

▼ 152 Driggs Ave.

BED-STUY

This part of Brooklyn is more Biggie Smalls than indie bands **BY GLYNN POGUE**

In the north-central Brooklyn neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, community is king. Pausing to greet your neighbor is an unwritten rule. So is having fun. On a Friday night at Peaches, locals settle in to try southern delights, such as a blackened catfish sandwich with creole remoulade. Later, they may drift around the corner to Casablanca Cocktail Lounge, a sultry spot where Jay Z, a Bed-Stuy native, and Beyoncé have been seen. Or they might decide to pick up ice cream from the corner bodega and hang on their stoops. Those, too, are hot spots.



Vodou Bar, a chic lounge on Halsey Street with a wicked mixologist, casts a late-night spell.

THERAPY WINE BAR

Pair an ever changing wine list with an ivy-drenched back deck, and you've got Bed-Stuy's favorite place to pull up a chair and unfurl your woes.

▼ 364 Lewis Ave.

L'ANTAGONISTE

Yep, a classic French restaurant right on Malcolm X Boulevard. A Bordeaux on the wine list priced at a whopping \$1,999 signals a neighborhood with options.

▼ 238 Malcolm X Blvd.

WEEKSVILLE HERITAGE CENTER

This museum is housed in three original residences of Weeksville, one of America's first free black communities.

▼ 158 Buffalo Ave.

LOVERS ROCK

Beneath pink neon lights, revelers sip boozy Old Jerks, a signature Appleton rum and jerk syrup cocktail, while working up a sweat to dub and dancehall tunes.

▼ 419 Tompkins Ave.

SINCERELY, TOMMY

This clothing shop meets coffee bar, owned by style setter Kai Avent-deLeon, is where women who are fly and fro'd come for gorgeous gear.

▼ 343 Tompkins Ave.

BAR LUNATICO

Easily one of the sexiest watering holes in the Stuy. Visiting bands from around the globe provide the sound track for this prime date-night spot.

▼ 486 Halsey St.

Check out these fiery night fests

Summer Solstice

Glastonbury, England

Glastonbury Tor (or hill) has been sacred for millennia, and on Midsummer Eve hundreds gather on it. Children throw petals, holy water is sprinkled, and the hill is blessed with fire.

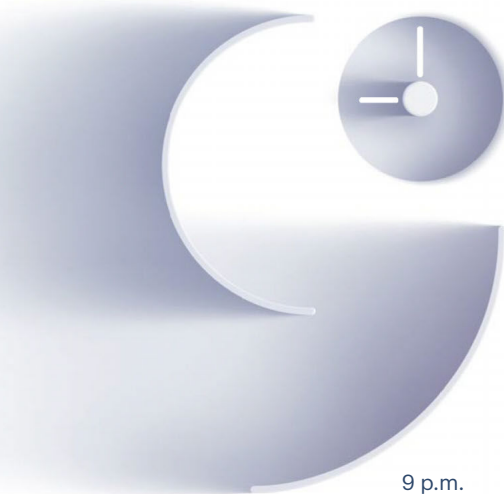
Feast of San Juan

Spain

At this June festival, revelers build bonfires that blaze through the night to welcome summer. According to tradition, jumping over a fire three times on San Juan night burns your troubles away.

Fire-breathing dragons come to life with fireworks during China's annual Shàngyuan festival.





9 p.m.



CHINA

Follow the late-night crowds to this sizzling nocturnal festival

During the Shangyuan festival on the 15th night of the first month of the Chinese new year, towns and villages across the country bathe in the glow of lanterns. Red paper globes fly among illuminated butterflies, dragons, and birds, each written with a riddle—those who solve them win a prize.

BUDAPEST

If you are Budapest bound, especially if you have never been to this city before, plan to arrive via the river at night. Danube cruise ship passengers know to be out on deck when the Hungarian capital's grand illu-

Best way to view the Hungarian capital? At night, and from the Danube

minated landmarks start to fill the scene, and the senses: the bristling domes of the Parliament building on the Pest side, the Castle atop its broad hill on the Buda side, and Chain Bridge guarded by stone lions connecting both halves of the city. It's a symphony of architecture, light, and rippling reflection that a history

of war, revolution, and occupation hasn't silenced. Dinner cruises, some accompanied by Gypsy violinists, pair chicken *paprikás* with the panorama. Those who prefer to stay on land can stroll the Pest embankment from the elegant Four Seasons Gresham Palace to the green towers of Liberty Bridge. —AMY ALIPIO

Strike it rich: Monte Carlo's casino (center) and the Hôtel de Paris (right)



MONACO

You don't have to roll with the royals to enjoy Monte Carlo

The cars outside the Monte Carlo casino include a mantis-green McLaren and a black Rolls with its top down. Next door, the restaurant at the Hôtel de Paris is by Alain Ducasse, of course. Down the hill in the yacht-filled Port Hercule, a cruise ship sails off to its next Mediterranean port of call. But it doesn't cost a thing to stroll the Circuit de Monaco, the route through town that roars with Formula 1 race cars during Grand Prix weekend in May. And ten euros gets you into the casino, surprisingly low-key despite its James Bond setting. —A.A.

11 p.m.

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In Norway's Lofoten Islands, the best time to view the northern lights is after 10 p.m. from September to March.

Sojourns for Northern Lights

GO WITH NAT GEO

Winterlake Lodge, Alaska

At this National Geographic Unique Lodge, search the night skies after a day spent dog-mushing and snowshoeing. natgeolodges.com

SKY AND SANDS

Sleeping Bear Dunes, Michigan

This national lakeshore has one of the darkest skies in the Midwest. Ski off-trail and sled a 260-foot dune. [sleepingbear dunes.com](http://sleepingbear-dunes.com)

COLD COMFORTS

ION Hotel, Iceland

Glacier walks and horseback rides culminate in evening soaks in the outdoor heated pool at this glass-walled hotel. ioniceland.is

CANADIAN ICE

Northern Lights Resort, Yukon

At this resort and spa surrounded by boreal forest, relax in an outdoor Jacuzzi and steam in a Finnish sauna. [northernlights yukon.com](http://northernlights-yukon.com)

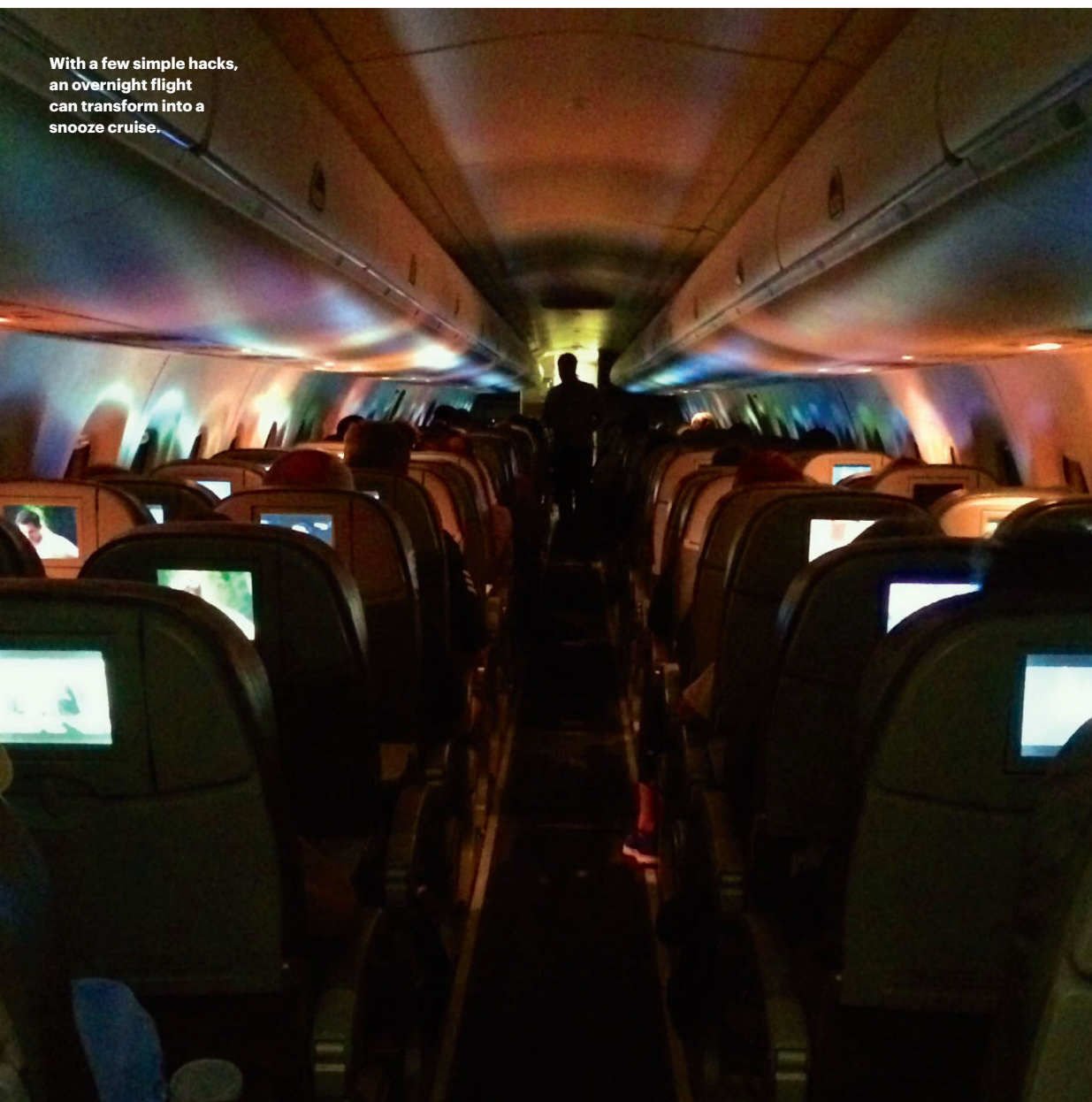


NORWAY

Go mad for midnight spectacles in the far north, featuring the dancing lights of the aurora borealis (if you're lucky)

When it comes to hunting the aurora borealis in the northern lights zone, a key consideration is making sure nothing stands between you and a clear night sky. In far northeastern Norway, 250 miles above the Arctic Circle, the Kirkenes Snowhotel offers both rooms constructed of packed snow and fishing-hut-style cabins with arched, panoramic windows and lounge chairs from which to watch the display in comfort. Venture off on a midnight snowshoe hike along a marked route to the edge of a fjord—and bring along a hot beverage from the hotel restaurant to add some coziness. kirkenessnowhotel.com —J.K.R.

With a few simple hacks, an overnight flight can transform into a snooze cruise.



ARIANNA'S TIPS

Get into Gear

I have sleeping gear permanently packed in my carry-on: an eye mask, earplugs, noise-canceling headphones, herbal teas (like lavender and licorice), and my favorite neck pillow. I also pack my own snacks—salt-free nuts, vegetables, and goat cheese and turkey in a container with an ice pack.

Mobile Motivator

Some apps aim to help you adjust to different time zones. Entrain, an app connecting users to sleep schedules developed by University of Michigan researchers, relies on math and data analysis to tell users how and when to utilize light so they can more quickly shift their sleep cycle in a new location.

Prep Work

Dr. Charles Czeisler, professor of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School, says that a common mistake with red-eyes is starting them off tired. "People are usually running around before their trip, so they tend to be sleep deprived when they set foot on the plane." Nap the day before.

Sniff Around

I'm an advocate of herbal sleep aids such as lavender or valerian root. Interior designer Michael Smith, who spends a large part of his life on planes, told me he sprays orange essential oil on the T-shirt he will sleep in that night. He finds the scent calms his mind and also has a humidifying effect.

IN THE AIR

How to snag some shut-eye on a red-eye



Arianna Huffington doesn't lose much sleep. In her new book, *The Sleep Revolution*, the former president and editor-in-chief of the *Huffington Post* advocates for frequent dozing off, and also offers tips for time zone-crossing travelers beyond just counting sheep. "Because I travel so much, I've learned over time that a little preparation goes a long way," she says. Here Huffington tells us how it's possible to get a good night's rest on a red-eye flight—even when you're sitting upright, wrapped in a threadbare, airline-provided blanket, and being used as your neighbor's pillow.



1 a.m.

GET READY FOR

ADVENTURE



Have you been dreaming of an amazing adventure travel experience? The kind of trip that results in stories and memories you'll treasure forever? Then you should definitely check out the Adventure Travel Trade Association, the clearinghouse for adventure travel. With a network of more than 400 tour operators offering nearly 100 activities in more than 100 destinations, ATTA will help you let your imagination run wild. Picture yourself hiking Peru's Inca Trail to Machu Picchu. Or think Alaska and envision rafting a frothing stream where grizzlies fish, or chartering a plane over towering peaks in America's last frontier. Combine France, biking, and cuisine, and you're off in search of the world's best wine and cheese. ATTA can make planning your trip a joy in itself. And there's a good chance that by the end of your trip you'll have achieved a perfect day, or maybe several.



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AN ADVENTURE IN MARATHON

The Florida Keys

There's nowhere for better maritime adventures than the Florida Keys, that graceful 120-mile sweep of islands in the clear emerald waters of Southern Florida.

For outdoor activities and boating adventures, head to ten-mile-long Marathon. Situated in the heart of the Keys, this enticing island features the spectacular Seven-Mile Bridge and the fun and fascinating Dolphin Research Center, which offers a variety of dolphin encounter experiences. After swimming with dolphins, visit the Turtle Hospital, the world's only veterinary hospital for sea turtles. Then head to Florida Keys Aquarium Encounters, where visitors can interact with all types of marine life. And, when your ready to get into the water, travel to the calm waters of the Gulf, or dive on the deep blue Florida Straits and explore the scuttled Thunderbolt.

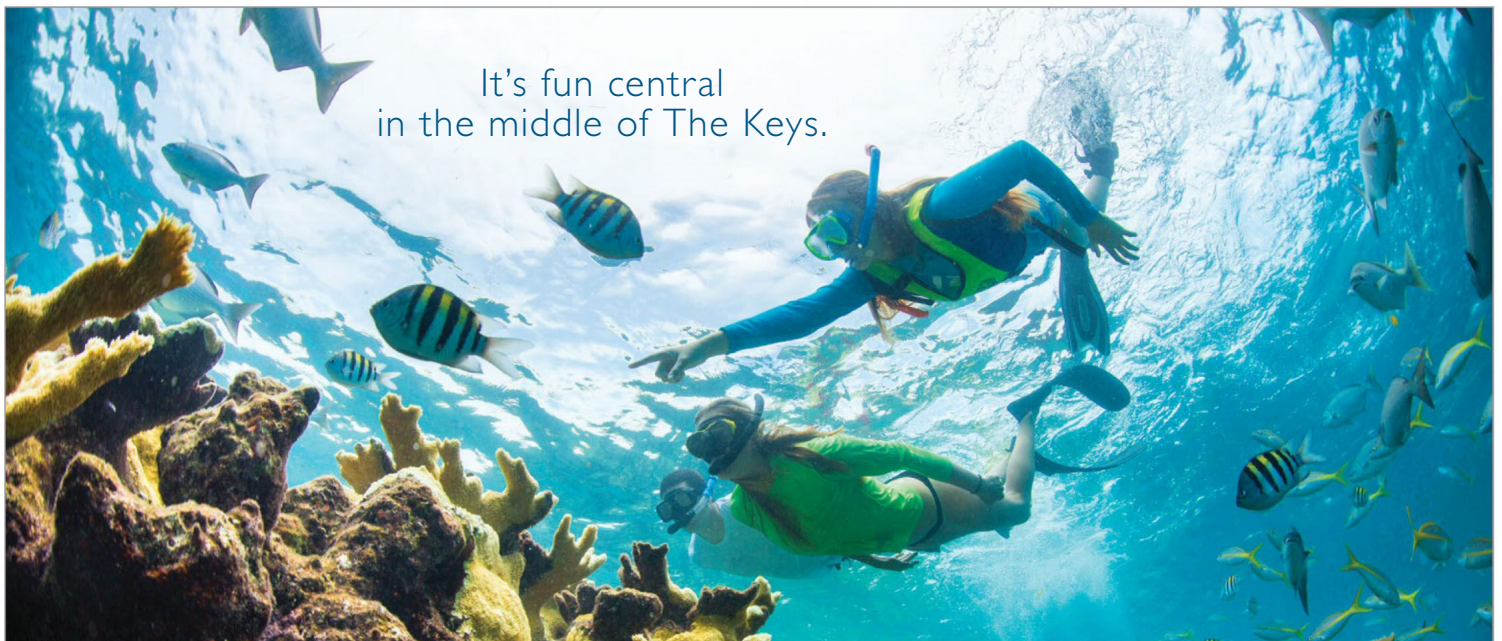
If you've never tried paddleboarding, Marathon is the place to fall in love with the sport. Standing on your board, paddling a tidal creek that meanders through a mangrove



forest, you'll feel connected to this watery world and its history (natural and human) in a way you never have before. Green herons flap among ancient tropical hardwoods, huge fish and turtles find refuge in the backwaters, and rare birds like the mangrove cuckoo and white-crowned pigeon find homes here.

Get underwater on a dive or snorkel tour and marvel at the colors and shapes of the only living coral barrier reef in the United States. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary protects the offshore reef. The list of activities goes on and on—parasailing, ocean kayaking, sportfishing—they're all here and all world-class.

It's fun central
in the middle of The Keys.



You'll never run out of fun things to do in Marathon. Bike the old Seven-Mile Bridge. Swim with dolphins. Catch a record gamefish. Explore the backcountry by kayak or paddleboard. Visit our Natural History Museum, Wild Bird Center or relax along Sombrero Beach. Hey, it's not called *Marathon* for nothing.

fla-keys.com/marathon 1.800.262.7284

The Florida Keys
Marathon



ADVENTURE TRAVEL GUIDE



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Best Time to Visit New Zealand?

We all dream differently, so start by picturing your perfect adventure. Hike our mountain passes in the comfort of our long, warm summer days—that's December through February. Have your best camera ready from June to August—our winter surrounds you with crisp blue-sky days and snowcapped peaks...and the air temperature is ideal for hiking. Wander through our stunning autumnal colors (April to June) or visit us in spring (September to November)—our countryside is bursting with fresh blossom and fields full of newborn lambs. Leave us with the task of avoiding the crowds: We're the locals down here and we'll take you to places that some kiwis don't even know about. All you need to decide, is when!

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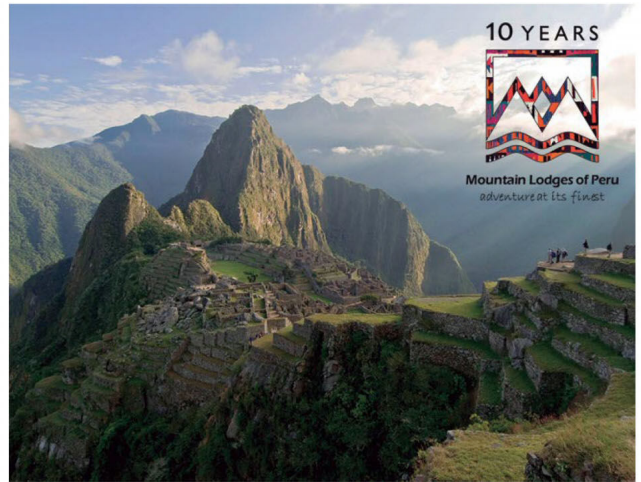
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During Aurora Season, August 21 through April 21, view the shimmering light of the aurora borealis. Fairbanks is one of the best places on Earth to see the northern lights, view larger-than-life ice sculptures, and experience the exhilarating sport of dog mushing. Request your free Visitors Guide today!

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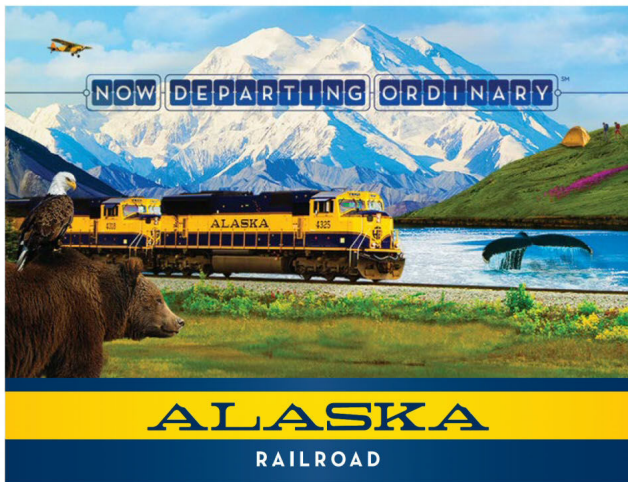
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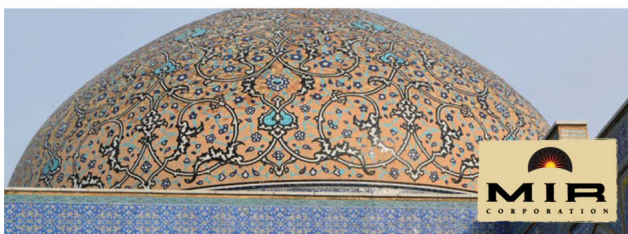
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ATACAMA DESERT

When the Chilean night is darkest, this is where you can best see the stars



2 a.m.

Sandwiched between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes, Chile's Atacama Desert is one of the driest spots on Earth, thanks to its position in a rain shadow, high atmospheric pressure, and cool winds from the ocean. Above all, the lack of light pollution

makes this an optimal stargazing site. Take a tour of the night sky with San Pedro de Atacama Celestial Explorations. Guides help identify constellations via both the naked eye and through an array of specially aligned outdoor telescopes. spaceobs.com —J.K.R.

GO WITH NAT GEO

Continue your sky viewing with the Star Chart app, from your private terrace at Tierra Atacama, one of the National Geographic Unique Lodges of the World. Daytime activities include hiking, biking, and wine tasting. natgeolodges.com



Feeling the groove at Bootleg, an underground club in Tel Aviv, Israel.

TEL AVIV

Israel's progressive city provides uninhibited Mediterranean nightlife

Tel Aviv has no last call, only last customers. Start the night by wandering down Allenby Street to Lucifer, which boasts some unconventional decor: big screens peeping on passersby on the street. Fresh air and affordable beers, such as city favorite Goldstar, can be found a few blocks away at HaMinzar. When crowds elsewhere start to thin, head to late-night spots like beachside Clara or underground club The Cat and the Dog. At the Breakfast Club, pumping techno and house music keeps the party pulsating until it's time for bacon and eggs at nearby Benedict, open around-the-clock. —CHRISTINE BLAU



3 a.m.



IN BED!

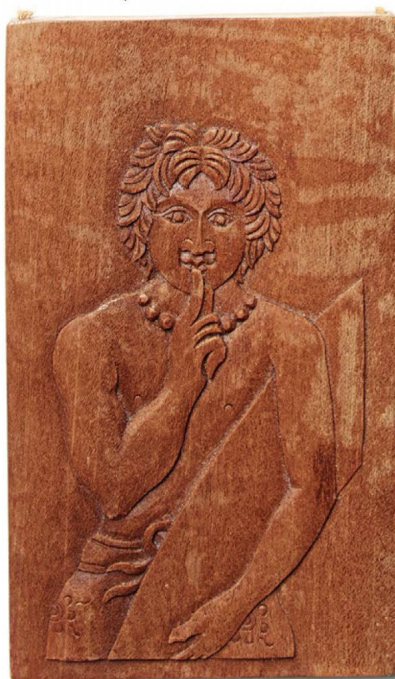
The only thing hanging outside your door should be one of these

1. Belmond Palacio Nazarenas, previously a palace and convent, offers a stately stay in Cusco, Peru. **2.** Amenities at Tiamo Resort, a National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World, in the Bahamas, include underwater caves and transparent canoes. **3.** Each room in Adelaide, Australia's Franklin Hotel features its own decor and local art. **4.** The Jane Hotel in New York City was first built as lodging for sailors, and even housed *Titanic* survivors. **5.** Ski-friendly mountains steal the show at El Lodge in Sierra Nevada, Spain. **6.** A former jail, Boston, Massachusetts' Liberty Hotel now has more willing visitors. **7.** In Las Vegas, the Cosmopolitan knows the best hangover cure is a pup in a swim cap. **8.** The Hard Days Night Hotel keeps Beatlemania strong in Liverpool, England, eight days a week. **9.** The Cullen in Melbourne, Australia, revolves around the devilish designs of artist Adam Cullen. **10.** Vienna, Austria's Hotel Daniel boasts a beehive, a bakery, and an Airstream suite. —HANNAH SHEINBERG



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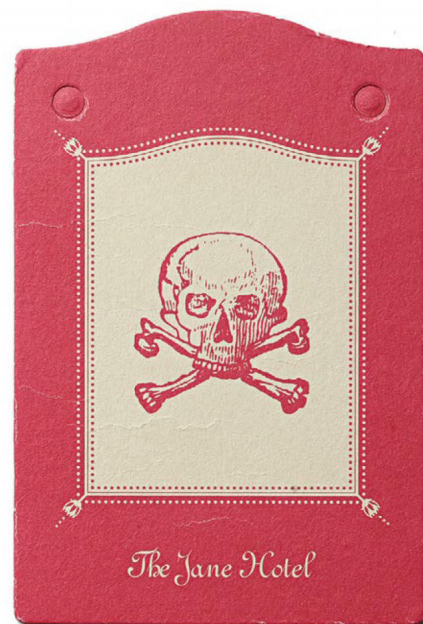
Shhh, this wooden sign hangs in a Nat Geo Unique Lodge of the World.



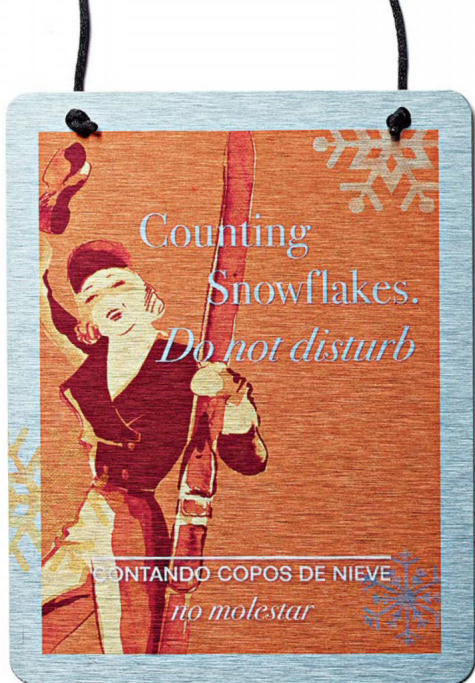
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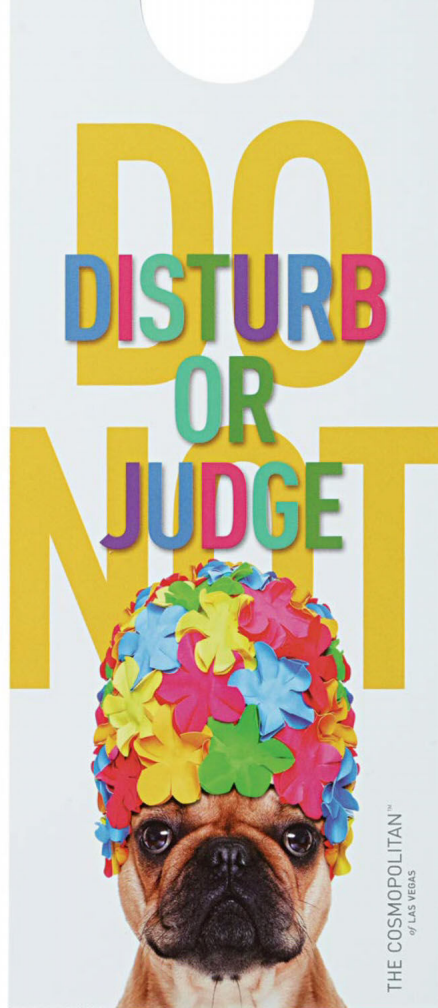
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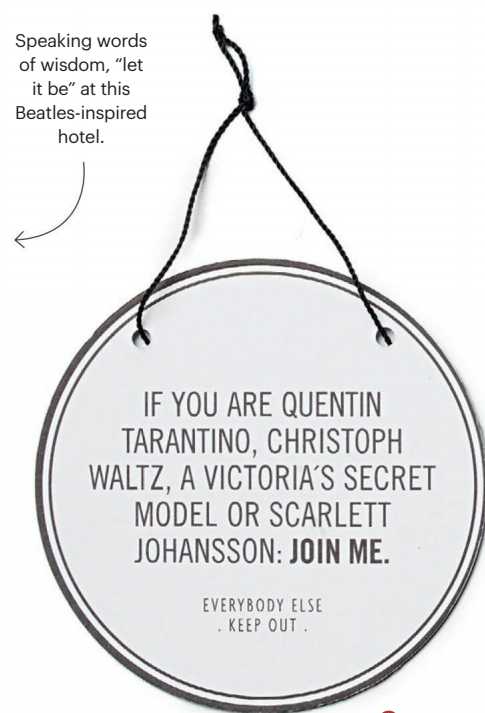
Solitary confinement is a welcome sentence at Boston's Liberty Hotel.

6



Speaking words of wisdom, "let it be" at this Beatles-inspired hotel.

8



10

Photo Finish

WE CELEBRATE THE WINNERS OF THE 2016 CONTEST FOR
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR

GRAND PRIZE

FIRST PLACE:
PEOPLE

"Winter Horseman"
by Anthony Lau

A horseman in deep
Inner Mongolia drives
his steeds through
a snow-churned
landscape.



The 2016 contest for the National Geographic Travel Photographer of the Year received more than 9,000 submissions, a trove of powerful images that convey the wonder and diversity of our world. Here we feature the First Place winners in our three categories: people, nature, and cities. The gripping shot of a horseman and his herd in Inner Mongolia also was awarded the Grand Prize. These and the thousands of other pictures we judged capture both a specific point in time and an entire story, reminding us of the power of visual storytelling and the beauty of the world in which we live.



**FIRST PLACE:
NATURE**

**"Wherever You Go,
I Will Follow"**
by Hiroki Inoue

Making tracks: Two red foxes scamper across snow near the town of Biei, Japan, as winter ends and the spring mating season approaches.



**FIRST PLACE:
CITIES**

"Beautiful Reflection"
by Takashi Nakagawa

The Ben Youssef Madrasa, which dates to the 1300s and is Morocco's largest Islamic college, is known for its Arab-Andalusian architecture.



Grand Prize: A seven-day polar bear safari for two in Manitoba, Canada, at Churchill Wild's Seal River Heritage Lodge, a National Geographic Unique Lodge of the World; includes airfare.

Categories: Each of the three categories—Cities, People, Nature—has three winners. **First Place Prize:** A Sony a6300 camera furnished by B&H Photo and Video. **Second Place Prize:** *The Art of Travel Photography*, on DVD. **Third Place Prize:** The National Geographic book *Destinations of a Lifetime*. All winners receive a subscription to *National Geographic Traveler* magazine.

View more prizewinners and entries at travel.nationalgeographic.com. Win a prize yourself! Enter the 2016 Contest for National Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year, which is accepting submissions until November 4: natgeo.com/photocontest.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

NEXTSTOP»

SIGNATURE EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS



Hit the Road on a Yosemite Adventure!

Explore one of America's oldest and favorite national parks on a trip that combines an extraordinary coastal drive, a beautiful beach break, and an amazing park adventure. Hit the road through 10 charming towns of **Coastal San Luis Obispo County** to take in the scenic vistas and attractions along **California's Highway 1 Discovery Route**. Stop at **Pismo Beach**, a classic beach town known for its long white beaches, lively boardwalk, and 1,200 ft pier. It's the perfect place to relax and enjoy wine tasting, fishing, surfing, golf, horseback riding, and beach fun.

Head inland to the **Arch Rock** entrance of **Yosemite National Park** in **Mariposa County** and experience iconic sites like **El Capitan**, **Half Dome**, and **Bridalveil Fall**. For a little adventure, be sure to rent a bike and take a cruise around the park, or sign up for a rock climbing class! Then head to **Tuolumne County's** portion of Yosemite to stand beside a grove of **Giant Sequoias**, hike to **Hetch Hetchy Reservoir**, and get misty at **Rancheria Falls**. Beyond the gate, step back in time to the 1850s and the **Gold Rush Wild West** towns, go fishing in mountain lakes, and see a brilliant night sky.

Get details and route map at nationalgeographic.com/roadtrips/Yosemite
Start planning your trip at expedia.com

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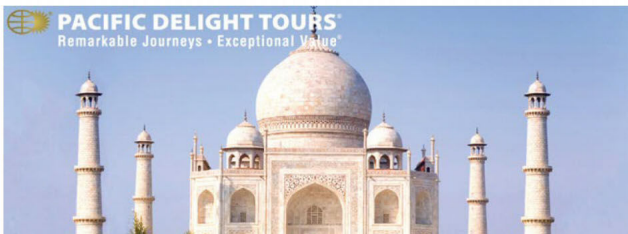
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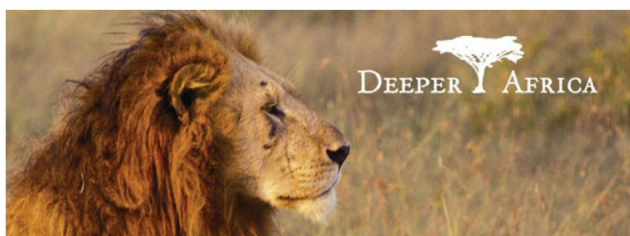
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COVER STORY



Broadway and Fifth Avenue have never looked this way, shading from day into night in one image, as they flow around New York's Flatiron Building. That is what excites photographer Stephen Wilkes. "I'm exploring the space-time continuum," he explains, "within a two-dimensional still photo." With the memorial lights of 9/11 acting as the vanishing point, this image taken in 2010 becomes "a picture about reflection and rebirth," says Wilkes. How does he create his images? "I look at a single place in a grid, then decide where day begins and night ends." That angle, whether it's diagonal, up and down, or front to back, becomes what Wilkes calls the time vector. "My eye moves through the scene based on time. My focus changes based on where time is." When the dimensions coalesce, he has his shot; the final image digitally combines many shots. "I'm a relentless collector of magical moments. That's what I do."

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Photo: A hiker marvels at the powerful cascades of Iceland's Seljalandsfoss.

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